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Merlin

by

Henry Lovelich

edited by

Ernst A. Kock

Part I

EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY

Extra Series, 93

1904

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Merlin.

Early English Text Society.

Extra Series, No. XCIII.

1904.

[*Reprinted 1932.*]

Merlin,

A MIDDLE-ENGLISH METRICAL VERSION

OF A FRENCH ROMANCE,

BY

HERRY LOVELICH,

SKINNER AND CITIZEN OF LONDON (AB. 1450 A.D.),

EDITED

FROM THE UNIQUE MS. 80 IN CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND GLOSSARIES,

BY

DR. ERNST A. KOCK.

PART I

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY

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Extra Series, XCIII.

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED, BUNGAY.

Merlin,

BY LOUELICH THE SKINNER.

(*MS.* 80 *in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.*)

[leaf 88 *c*]

Chap. I.

Now gyneth the devel to wraththen him sore
(as aftir scholen ȝe herkene & here wel more),
whanne that oure lord to helle wente,
and took owt Adam with good entente,
and also Eve, and ek othere mo,
þat with him he likede forto han tho.
and whanne þe develis behelden this,
moche drede and merveille they hadden, j-wis
So, as Aftyrward longe be-Felle,
to-gederis they conseilled, the develis, ful snelle,
and token hem to-gederis Jn parlement,
the maister-develis, be on assent,
and seiden: "what mester man Js he, this,
that doth vs here al this distres?
we mown not aȝens him maken defens,
whanne he is owht Jn owre presens,
and bynemeth vs that we scholde haue,
and for hym non thing mowen we kepen save.
For we supposede, ful verrayly,
that non man scholde be born of wommans body,
that alle owre they weren be Ryht,
but he hem benemeth vs be his myht.
Sey, how was this ȝoman bore,
be whom owre Ryht js thus forlore?"
thanne answerede anothir devel,
and, as him thowhte, he answerede wel:
"we hauen herd sein be prophecye
that god jn erthe here Scholde dye
Forto saven the Synneris here,
that of Adam and Eve come jn fere.

The devils, angry on account of Christ rescuing Adam and his race from Hell,

[leaf 88 *d*]

hold a council.

They wonder who he is,

that thus deprives them of their supposed right.

One of the devils says that the same is the Son of God, who died to save sinners,

30. *and Eve* added above the line.

and who, in all trials and tribulations,

Anon wenten we thanne hem to prove,
and Evere weren they stedfast jn goddis love,
and the More turment we diden hem do,
Evere the ferthere they weren vs fro,
So that Evere jn here moste peyne
To hem aperede he, jn certeygne,
comforts and helps His faithful ones.
and hem comforted so wondirly wel,
that owre tormentes greved hem neuere a del,
and Euere jn here Moste distresse
he hem deliuerede to Sikirnesse."

The devils agree that,

Thus talkydden they þere al jn fere
of thinges that befallen were—
"That thus from vs hath he taken away
thinges that we not kepen ne May.
wel knowen ȝe alle here wel Everychon
through baptism
that jn water he doth hem waschen anon,
jn þe Name of the Fadir and sone & holi gost,
whiche that ben of Myhtes Most,
and anointment,
and also hem anoynteth with oynement,
where-thorwh owre powere js al j-schent,
So that oure part of hem, Jt is don,
Tyl that owre Servauntes they becom.
He and His ministers
and thus owre power he doth away,
and so don his Mynestres Everyday,
that jn Erthe he hath left here;
they don vs ful often wel mochel dere.
For they, oure Servantes the[y] ben be Ryht,
ȝit ouer hem han they so gret Myht,
that, and they welen oure Servise forsake
and onliche to Jesu thanne hem take,
annihilate their power over mankind.
alle oure powere, than Js it j-don,
and thus we lesen hem Everychon.
Moche goodnesse schewed he for Man-kynde,
Born of a woman,
that jn this world he wold hym bynde
of a wommans body to ben j-bore,
to Saven Mankynde, that was forlore.

32. *they*, *e* corrected from *y*.
47. MS. þ^{e}; similarly l. 97 and often; sometimes also þ^{e}*dir*, *so*þ^{e}, and the like. 57. MS. *the ben*.
62. MS. *Evey chon* with the (*e*)*r*-mark twice over *ey*.

and whanne that he j-boren was,
we hym assaieden jn Every plas,
as moche as was jn owre powere,
and neuere gilty ne fownden we hym jn non Manere,
jn hym of oure werkes neuere Ryht nowht,
For al that Evere we to hym wrowht,
But that he wolde deyen to saven Man,
For jn him hadde we non powere than.
Ful Mochel cherte hadde he to Man,
that so Mochel peyne suffrede for him than,
and hym forto wynnen ageyn,
and from vs hem be-reven, jn certeyn.
Ful Mochel sorwe to vs he wrowhte
thorwgh Mankynde, that he bowhte."
thanne anon Spoken they Jn fere
of Swiche thinges as Greved hem there,
of hem that proclamed the tydyng
Ferst jn the Erthe of his comeng:
" and whanne we ony tormentes scholde hem do,
anon he delyverede hem vs Fro.
Therfore wolden we weten ful fayn
The beste to done, Jn certayn,
how that jn the Erthe a child to have
that the peple wolde aftyr crave.
For he scholde hauen alle connenge
of thyng þat js past and that is comenge,
and Encense the peple to oure lore,
as he dyde that was þere be-fore,
To tellen hem of thinges þat hadde be
and befalle scholden, ful Sikerle.
So scholde he þe peple to vs drawe,
For of hym they wolden ben Ryht fawe."
thanne seiden they amonges hem Everichon
that swich a child, and they hadden on,
wel Mochel he scholde hem profyte
and torne the peple to here delyte,
For fulwel beleved scholde he be
For his prophecyes, ful Sikerle.

and tempted by the devils,

He remained without sin,

and died for the love of man.

[leaf 89 *a*]

The devils further speak of the prophets, who were likewise sustained by Christ.

Now the devils would like to have, on earth, a child with the same mental powers,

to draw the people to them.

94. *fore*, *f* corrected from *b*. 95. MS. þ^t *fcholde be*.

thanne stirte there forth a schrewe anon,
One devil declares he can make women conceive, and seide amongẽs hem Everichon:
"J haue power Seed forto Sowe
jn the Erthe on wo*m*men bothe hye & lowe,
and j haue on Redy at Myn assent,
that wil Fulfillen Myn talent."
and they form a plan accordingly, So concentyd they that this ilke schrewe
jnto Erthe scholde gon ano*n* that threwe
Forto Fulfillen that jlke dede,
of wheche alle the schrewes token here Rede.
In foolish ignorance of God's wise intentions. Now, grete Foles weren they Everychon,
that amongẽs hem cowde not knowe*n* on
how that God knew wel alle thyng,
bothe gy*n*neng, Midwardis, and Endyng!
thus departyd they from here conseylle
this werk to be-gynne, with-owte*n* faille.
The devil repairs thanne he that seide that he hadde powere
on women jn Erthe to Engendren there,
he taryed there non lengere thanne,
to a woman, but cam jnto Erthe to this wo*m*ma*n*ne
whiche wo*m*man that dyde hym Servise.
with hire he anon Mette jn prevy Gyse,
and ano*n* he tempted hire so,
who promises to help him. that anon sche Concentyd hym to,
and grau*n*ted hym, al that sche cowde o*þ*er Myhte,
To don him Servyse bothe day & Nyhte.
This woman has a rich husband; and hire lord was a worthy Man,
& moche more good hadde tha*n*ne J telle kan.

This Riche Man hadde moche of worldly good,
More tha*n*ne ony man tho vndirstood,
of Bestes and of other Richesse,
of kamailles, of jewelis, & of o*þ*er worthynesse.
they have three [leaf 89 *b*] daughters and one son. This worthy Man hadde dowhtren thre,
The Fa[y]rest Wo*m*men that Myhte be,
and a sone, that scholde ben his Eyr,
bothe a gentilma*n*ly child and a fayr;
and alle he hadde be this wo*m*man,
that þe devel so mochel part hadde of than.

138. MS. *farest.*

thanne this devel forȝat non thing,
that Rowhte not of Mannes begyleng,
and axede of this womman anon
how that Best he myhte don
hire lord to haue to his partye,
hym forto tellen he preyde hire hye.
sche answerede: "*With* non thing so sone, j-wys,
as only be wraththe, with-owten Mys;
For Ryht lyhtleche he wile wroth be,
as j the telle now ful sikerle;
and *þer*-fore wraththe thou myht him sone
with the leste thing that thou wilt done."
thanne wente forth this cursed schrewe anone,
and slowgh his bestes alle thus sone,
a gret partye of hem jn a Nyht.
and on the Morwen, whanne it was lyht,
the pastour aspide that Moreygne,
and to his lord he wente, ful pleyne,
and told hym of that aventure,
how his bestes deiden, J ȝow Ensure.
and whanne that the goode lord herde this,
Ful wondirly wroth he was, j-wys,
and axede of the pastour tho
what Skile his bestes deyden so.
the pastour answerede him ageyn:
"Sire, j ne can not weten, jn certein!"
So belefte he stille alle that day.
and whanne the devel this knew & say,
that for so lytel he wolde wroth be,
thanne was he joyful, wel Sekirle,
and thowhte more harm hym to do,
be wraththe þe sonnere to drawen hym to.
So that he * the nexte Nyht
jnto his stable, j Sey ȝow Ryht,
and there ten of his hors slowgh he,
the beste that weren jn that Contre.

The devil asks her for the best means of insnaring her husband.

She answers: "Make him angry!"

The devil then kills some of his cattle;

and when the herd brings the news in the morning,

the man is wonderfully wroth.

Encouraged by the success,

the devil kills ten of the man's horses;

147. *hir'*, *r'* through correction. 155. MS. *anoñe.*
157. MS. *agret;* similarly l. 212 (*aplawncher*), and frequently.
175. The verb (*wente*?) is missing; cf. ll. 155, 209, and footnote to l. 1719.

and the man angrily exclaims:

and whanne the goodman wiste of this,
that al his good wente so amys,
anon Ryht angry ful sone he was
for tho tydynges jn that plas,
and a word of anger spak he thore,
wheche after repentyd him ful sore,
and be-took the devel al the Remnaunt,
That him be-lefte, petyt & graunt.

"May the devil take the lot!"

Whanne that the devel herde him so seyn,
thanne was he bothe joyful & fayn,
and thowhte to Greven him moche More
thanne that he dyde ony tyme before.
For he made the goode man thanne so wroth,
that Eche mannes compenye was hym loth.
thanne wiste anon the devel ful wel
that jn him hadde he part a gret del,
and that wel jnowgh he myhte go
jnto what partye him lykede tho.

And so the devil gladly does:

Thanne cam the devel to his sone & his Eyr,
That was bothe so gentyl & Fayr;
Vppon A Nyht, As he in his bed lay,
the devel him strangelede, the sothe to say;
and vppon the Morwen hym fond ded
his owne fadir Jn that same sted.
thanne was he Ryht a sorweful Man,
For that non Recowr ne knew he than,
Sethen that his faire sone he hadde lost so,
thanne jnto disperaunce fyl he tho.
and whanne the devel vndirstod al this,
thanne was he joyful, with-owten Mis.

the son and heir

[leaf 89 c]

is found strangled in his bed,

the wife takes her own life in the loft,

anon thanne wente he to his wyf,
that began al this wo and stryf;
jnto an hygh soler he dyde hire Go,
and abowtes a plawncher a Rope caste tho,
and Sette a thing thanne vndir hire feet,
& þe Rope abowtes hire Nekke teydde askeet;
thanne voided sche anon hire stondyng,
þat so thike cursed womman þere hyre-self heng.
whanne the husbonde beheld al this,

that his wyf thus ded was, j-wys,
and also his sone Jn Swich manere,
thanne was he of wondyr hevy chere,
that there for sorwe he deyde anon,
and thus alle thre, thanne weren they gon.
Lo, thus the devel doth be hem alle
that jn his Servise ony thing don falle.

and the bereft man himself dies with grief.

thanne caste the cursede schrewe a wyle
how þat he myhte his thre dowhtres begyle;
and wel he wyste, Jt myhte not be
but thorwgh som man of his afynyte.
So was there a bacheler Jn the town,
that folwed his werkis bothe vpe and down;
and hym to this place he dyde propyne
these thre faire maidenis forto engyne;
and so ofte thedyr he gan to gon,
that thussone he hadde ouercomen the ton.
and whanne be hire he hadde don folye,
the devel anon it schewede openlye,
and disclawndred it al the contre,
the more schame to hem þat it scholde be.
and jn thyke tyme was tho the lawe,
that ho so dyde avowtrye, scholde be slawe
and with stones j-browht to the ded,
For that was the lawe Jn that sted;
and thus with Stoneng scholden they ben schent,
but ȝif sche were comwne to alle mennes entent.

Now the three daughters remain.

One of them is seduced by a young man from the town,

her disgrace is divulged,

and according to the law she must die.

Thanne thus this womman was taken anon,
and the man fledde and was agon;
and anon was browht to-forn the justice
there forto Resceyven hire jewyse.
so that of hire they hadden pyte,
Swich maner of jewyse be hire to se,
For that hire fadyr was so worthy a man,
and Jn so schort tyme was mischevyd than.
but Natheles nedis ded moste sche be,
and thanne thus acordid they, Sykerle,

The judges, out of pity, decide to let the execution take place in the night.

252. *Jn*, *J* corrected from *s*; *so* added above the line.

So that for love of hire kynrede
be Nyhtes tyme hire stone to dede.

A holy hermit, on hearing of all this, visits the grieving sisters,

thanne jn that contre was there a good man,
that of alle these merveilles herde than,
and to the tweyne sostren gan he gon
hem forto cownseillen with anon.
and there anon he spak hem tylle,

and inquires about their [leaf 89 *d*] disasters.

and axede how this misaventure befille—
"Of 3owre fadyr And modyr jn Fere,
of 3owre brothir and 3oure Soster dere?"
"We nete Neuere, Sire, jn certeyn,

The girls say that God seems to hate them.

but 3if that god vs hate, ful pleyn,
and this torment Suffreth vs to haue;
we knowen non othyr, so god vs saue!"

The hermit rebukes them,

thanne seide this goodman to hem tho:
"Forsothe, 3e seyn mys bothe two,
For god hatede nevere creature,
but Js misplesid, J 3ow enswre,
whanne ony Synnere doth him hate
Owthir for ony thing with him debate.
For weteth ful wel, as j 3ow telle,

casts the blame on the devil,

that is the werk of the devel of helle;
and that 3oure soster thus Js ded,
Syker it is be the develys red."
"Sire, so god now be owre helpyng,
we knewen neuere of this thyng."

and exhorts them to a good life.

"thanne kepe 3e 3ow from jlle werkyng,
and caste 3ow to plese now hevene kyng;
for jlle werk bryngeth a man to evele ende
and jn-to synne & synneres schende;
and he that hym wol not kepen from jlle werkyng,
to ille ende it bringeth hym at his deyeng."
thanne thus prechid hem this good man,
how that they scholden bope plesen an serven god than.

The elder sister likes his lore.

So that the eldest Soster of hem bothe
his teching liked wel, forsothe,
and seide that sche wolde potten al hire peyne
hys doctryne to kepen, jn certeyne.

286. *deyeng*, the first *e* corrected from *y*.

thanne seide this goodman to hem tho:
"3if that 3e welen thus aftyr me do,
3e scholen ben bothe my loves dere
and my dowhtren jn God, bothe jn fere.
and 3if 3e hauen Nede of ony thyng
owþer of ony maner of cownseyllyng,
Swich helpe and cownseil as j kan do,
J schal it for 3ow don Evere Mo.
and therfore abasche 3ow Ryht nowht,
but stedfastly beleveth jn hym that 3ow bowht;
and that 3e comen often-tymes to Me,
for fer from 3ow j ne schal not be."
thus hem cow[n]ceillede this holy Man,
and forth his weye anon wente he than.

whanne that the devel wiste of this,
Moche sorwe he made, with-owten Mys,
and wiste wel þat Engyned myhten they not be
but be som woman, ful Sykerle.
So was there on, as j vndirstonde,
that jn his Servise hadde dwellid longe;
and anon it putte jn hire herte,
that to thike Maidenis 3he scholde gon ful smerte.
and so sche dide anon, this wikked woman,
wente forto cownseillen with hem than,
and took the 3ongest Soster on Syde,
and anon with hire counseilled that tyde,
hire axeng anon how 3he did fare,
and what Maner thing hire soster dyde thare.
"Loueth sche not 3ow wondirly wel?"
"3is, and Ellis were it a3ens Resown & Skyl;
but that sche is other while hevy
For this Mysaventure, trewely,
The wheche jn Schort tyme to vs is befalle
of oure fadyr & Modir and Frendis alle,
So that with hire is non Manere of chere,
Nethir to Me ne to non oþer ellis where,
but doth al aftyr a goodmannes techyng,

The hermit says he will be a father to them,

ever ready to help and advise.

The devil, annoyed at this,

sends a bad woman

to make the younger girl

dissatisfied with her sister

305. MS. *couceillede*; cf. the footnote to l. 853.
314. *3he* corrected from *they*. 319. *3he*, *h* corrected from *e*.
320. *hir*', *r*' through correction; *softer* added above the line.

That here faste be-sydes is his dwellyng,
[leaf 90 *a*] So that nothyng sche Wyle do,
but ȝif he only consente to."
"A," quod this olde Bawde tho,
and with their present mode of life. "thou knowest of Mochel sorwe & wo,
and neuere of joye schalt þou knowe, trewly
as longe as thou art jn hire compenye.
A, my leve dowghter so dere,
She extols the indulgence of lust, ȝif that thou knewe what Mannes compenye were,
thou wost neuere Resten ne dwelle,
Tyl Mannes Feleschepe ȝe comen vntylle.
more desirable than anything else, For better at Ese Seker ben we,
Jn Mannes compenye whanne that we be,
althowgh we haue but on almesse of Bred,
thanne ȝe with al ȝoure good jn ȝoure sted.
Fy of joye of ony wommman,
but ȝif sche haue joye oþer compenye of Man!
My Fayre dowhter, to ȝow this j seye,
for that ȝe knowen not Mannes compenye.
and points out the girl's disadvantageous position, as a younger sister, with regard to inheritance and matrimony. and wete ȝe why J thus to ȝow Seye?
ȝowre Soster is Eldere than ȝe, trewlye,
and taketh this here as hire owne good,
and the lasse setteth be ȝow, be the Rood,
So that the joye of ȝoure fayre Body
Js ful clene j-lost, j seȝ ȝow trewely."
The girl is interested, but frightened of her sister's fate. thanne seide this damysele to hire tho:
"how scholde j this thing thus do
that ȝe to me speken offe pleynly,
whanne that my Soster was ded therby?"
"jn the name of God," quod this Bawde thanne,
The woman says there is a means of avoiding it. "ȝowre Sostyr wrowhte as a folisch wommanne!
but ȝif ȝe wile werken aftyr Me
and to my conseille trosten, sekerle,
ȝe scholde neuere comen to-fore justice,
and ȝit haue ȝoure delytes Jn alle wyse."
The girl, for fear of her sister, "A," quod this damysele, "how scholde j do?
that j ne myhte ȝow speken more vnto!
For j ne dar not for my soster here

366. After *ſpeken* another *ȝow* was added above the line, but erased again.

Nethir to ȝow Speke ne Make non chere.
Goth ȝe now hens, tyl that Eftt sone
that we Mown Speke to-gederys alone!"
whanne that the devel herde hire so seyn,
Thanne was the schrewe jn joye, ful pleyn,
and wiste wel be hire answeryng
that sche scholde hoppen vppon hys Rynge.
whanne this womman from thens was past,
this damysele bethowghte hire atte last
often-tymes of hire wordis, pleyn,
that prevyly betwenes hem gonne they seyn.
and whanne the devel vndirstod openly
that to-gyderis schólden they speken prevyly,
thanne sette he this Maydenis herte on fyre
aftyr this womman móre to desire;
that so ferforth, as j ȝow seye,
atte laste sche beheld hire fayre Bodye,
and to hire-Self thus gan sche talke,
alone as sche jn hire chambre gan walke:
"Ful trewly me this good womman tolde
that this Faire Body lost ben Scholde!"

bids the woman to leave for the time.

The devil, however, is now sure of success.

The girl muses on the woman's words,

and finishes by thinking that she is right.

Thanne aftyr hire sche sente vppon a day,
and thus to hire anon gan sche say:
"Certes, ful trowe now j it fynde,
that my soster to me Js vnkynde."
"that knew j, damysele, tho ful wel,
lyk as j ȝow tolde Everydel,
and lasse be ȝow wile sche sette,
For sche fareth Every Day bette and bette.
for sche lyveth as sche liketh Best,
whiche is to ȝow nethir Ese ne Rest,
and ȝe ben ordeygned for Mannes kende,
and therto ben ȝe bothe good and hende."
thanne seide this damysele anon agayn:
"that joye wolde j hauen fulfayn;
ȝif that j wiste not To ben ded,
J scholde concenten to ȝoure red."

She then sends for the woman,

who renews her provoking

[leaf 90 b]

and tempting speeches.

The girl asks again

403. *To*, *T* through correction.

"J sey 3ow, damysele, *with*-owten dwere,
and 3e don as dyde 3oure soster dere,
ded moste 3e thanne Nedlynges be,
but and 3e welen werken aftyr me." 408

for that means of safe indulgence of lust.

"leve dame, thanne how Scholde J do
My lust to haue, and they not me Slo?"
thanne this Bawde answerid hire agayn:

At length she is told:

"J schal 3ow tellen, Jn certayn: 412
3e scholen 3ow maken as 3e weren wroth,
and that 3owre sostres compenye is 3ow loth,

"Be a prostitute!"

and þerfore graunteth to alle men buxom to
and to leden 3oure lyf jn lechere; 416
thanne hath there powere non justyse
3ow forto putten to non jewyse,
and thus al 3oure lust scholen 3e haue
and from alle peryles to ben Save. 420
3it thanne myhte there comen som good man,
that for 3oure erytage wolde wedden [3ow] than."

She follows the advice, stealing away from home.

Thanne thus behyhte 3e hire forto don,
and from hire Soster sche stal anon, 424
and bond hire a comown womman to be,
be cownseil of that womman, Sikerle.

Ful mochel joye made the devel thanne,
whanne he hadde thus geten this wommanne. 428

The elder sister then goes to the hermit,

and whanne the eldest Sostyr knew of this,
that thus hire Soster hadde don amys,
anon wente sche to this good man tho,
that to-fore tymes here creaunce tawhte hem so, 432

sorrowing and weeping,

with sory herte and weping chere.
Anon this goodman axede what hire were,
and of hire hadde ful gret pyte,
& to hire thanne anon Seyde he: 436
"blesse the jn the Name of the Trenite,
and telle me now what eylleth the."

and tells of her fresh misery.

"ha, Sire," sche Seide, "J am ful wo!
My soster from me js now a-go, 440

422. MS. *weddē than*; cf. l. 522.
436. *Thanne*, T through correction.

and is becomen a comown wo*m*man.
ful wo for hire am j now than!"
whanne that this goodman herde of this, The hermit, grieved and
Ful sory he was and wroth, j-wys, 444 indignant,
and seide: "The devel Nyl not belynne,
tyl that he haue ȝow alle jn his Gy*n*ne,
but ȝif that God now be thy wardeyn,
J seye ȝow, damysele, jn certeyn." 448
"Now, leve Sire, how scholde j do
That Fals thef to kepen me fro?"
tha*n*ne seide to hire this good M*a*n anon: gives her
"J schal ȝow telle how ȝe schole don. 452 advice how now to protect
ȝif that thou wylt ȝon aftyr Me, herself, at least, from the devil:
he ne schal neu*e*re deceyven the."
"Now certes," quod this damysele a-geyn,
"aftyr ȝow wyl j don, Jn certeyn, 456
what so Evere ȝe bydde me do,
whethir it torne me to wele o*þ*er wo."
"belevest *þ*ou not on fadyr & sone & holigost, she must have the
thre p*er*sones and on God of myhtes Most, 460 right faith,
and that crist amonge*s* vs cam here
For M*a*nnes sowle, that he bowhte so dere,
and alle synneris to saven also
That his comawndeme*n*t Wolden do, 464 [leaf 90 c]
and beleven as holy chirche,
and as good cristen folk to wirche?" and act as a good Christian;
thanne answerid this damysele ageyn:
"J wil beleven as ȝe wyle seyn; 468
and as wisly as on God j be-leve,
so from alle tormentis he mot me Meve!"
"thanne More over J charge the she must beware of
that jn no*n* wyse wroth that thou be; 472 anger,
For that is on of the Moste thing
wherthorwgh the devel doth his werkyng.
and loke thow love god over alle thyng and, in true love of God
and thy Neyghbour wi*th*-owten grochcheng. 476 and neighbours,
& so be that Governau*n*ce
*þ*ou myht the kepe from alle Mischawnse.

451. Erasures after *hire* and *good*; the M came out of the muddle apparently with four downstrokes.

keep herself free from all guilt;

and loke that cowpable nevere thou be
ayens thy god Jn non Manere degre,
but that thou plese hym vtterly
and alle the seintes of hevene generally,
That loven god and his Servise;
loke thow hem love jn alle wyse.

she must bless herself in rising and before going to bed,

and loke, Eche tyme that thou dost Ryse,
that thou þe blesse be ony wyse,
and also that thow blesse the Every Nyht,
Er that thou jn thy Bed lye down Ryht,
jn the Name of the Fadyr and sone and þe holygost,
which that is on God and of Myhtes Most.

making the sign of the cross,

and with that loke thou make a Cros on the,
Jn Memorye that he deyde vppon the tre
vs for to beyen from the peynes of helle.
loke thou do thus as j the telle!
and of that Enemy haue thow neuere non drede,
where Euere thow be Jn ony stede;

and have a light burning in the night.

and where so Evere thow lye on Nyht,
Loke be ony weyes that thou have lyht,
For there as lyht is, he ne wyl not be,
For lyht hateth he most, ful Sekerle!"

Thus this holy Man tawhte this Mayde,
that gret drede hadde, as j have 3ow sayde,
lest that the devel hire Scholde be-gyle.

The girl goes home, and follows the hermit's instructions.

thus wente sche hom with-jnne a whille
Jn ful beleve ful stedfastly
and to hire Neyghbours ful Mek and lowly;
also Evere hire god hadde sche jn Mynde,
that so to god and to þe peple was sche good & kende.

She is reminded, by her neighbours, of her family troubles,

the goode Men and the goode Wyves of that contre
often to that Mayden comen, ful Sekerle,
and thus to hire thanne gonnen they saye:
"Jt Nis non wondyr thowgh 3e han Fraye
of the torment that is 3ow befalle
of 3oure Fadyr & Modyr and frendis alle,
whiche that 3owre brothir and Sostren were.

486. þe squeezed in afterwards. 488. *E* through correction.
495. *of* added above the line. 505. MS. *fulbeleve*.

here Misaventure, it is to ȝow gret dere,
but that ȝe take now som good cownsaille;
For ful Riche ȝe ben and of ful gret availle,
and worthy ȝe ben of Erytage,
that Som Man that is of hygh parage,
that fulfayn he wolde be
ȝow wedden to wyve, ful Sykerle."
thanne seide this Maiden to hem anon Ryht:
"Me Governe and kepe God, þat is Most of Myht,
and jn his Servise me Governe & kepe
at alle tymes, whethir j wake oþer slepe!"
and thus tweyne ȝer lyvede sche fully,
That of hire power neuere hadde the fals Enemy,
Ne he Myhte nevere Jn non Degre
hire Fynden Jn non adversite.

And whanne he Sawhe that he ne Myhte
that Mayden Engynen be day ne Nyhte,
Nether Maken hire to forȝeten jn non degre
that the goodman tawht hire, ful Sykerle
(For wroth wolde sche ben jn non Manere
Ne lyhtles, where so that Evere sche were),
thanne to hire Soster he wente anon,
and to this goode Mayden dyde hire to gon
vppon a satirday, whanne it was Eve
(tyl sche was forthe, he Nolde not leve),
hire Soster Jn anger Forto brynge,
þat he on hire myhte werken his Engynenge.
So that hire Soster thider went
& with hire Many knaves, verament.
thanne seide this Maiden jn this Manere:
"A, leeve Soster, what do ȝe here,
ȝe forto comen jn Swich degre,
and with ȝow to bryngen swich compeyne?
Jt schal me Maken blame to have,
and þat Nedeth me not, so god me saue!"

and of her own position.

In prayers to God,

she keeps off the devil for two years.

[leaf 90 *d*]

But then the devil, thus balked,

contrives to send her fallen sister to her, of a Saturday night,

with a lot of rowdy followers.

517. *cownſaille*, *a* corrected from *e*; cf. the footnotes to ll. 2051, 3531, 5707, 5855, etc.
522–524. *wedden*, *ſeide*, *Goverñ* partly blotted.
528. *neuere* added above the line.
530. *adverſite*, *d* corrected from *v*. 547. *ȝe* on erasure.
548. *ȝow* added above the line.

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She is accused, by her, of forbidden intercourse with the hermit,

thanne spak this cursed damysele ageyn:
"thow lyvest moche wers than j, jn certeyn!"
and bar hire good soster on hande vppon
that jn folye sche lovede that holy man.
"and ȝif that the peple it wiste, Sekerlye
anon wolden they the distroye!"
and whanne this Maide herde hire so seyn,

flies into a rage, has a tussle with the disturbers,

be bothe scholdres sche took hire, ful pleyn,
and wolde han put hire owt at the ȝate,
but that hire knaues wolde hire not late,
but setten hand on this good Maiden anon,
and hire to-beten bothe bak an bon,
Tyl atte laste sche brak hem fro,

rushes into her chamber, locks her door,

& jnto hire chambre sche gan to go,
and schitte the dore faste hire vppon,
and so there-jnne dwelde al alon.
& non more peple with hire gan dwelle
but a Man and a Maide, as j ȝow telle,
and for hem nolden they not Spare,
but diden this goode womman moche care.
this Maiden alone jn hire chambre was,
and ful Mochel Mone Made jn that plas,
and wept and sorwede mochel of the Nyht,

flings herself on the bed,

so that jn hire clothes sche leide hire down Ryht.
Anon as this Enemy this gan aspye,
that sche was so angry vttirlye,
thanne Made he bothe joye and game,
whiche torned this Maiden to mochel blame.
Thanne of gret deol this Maide hire thowhte,

and forgets, in her emotion and grief,

So that of hire-self but litel sche rowhte.
sche hire Remembrid of Fadyr and Modyr bothe,
and of hire brother and Sostren, forsothe,
and of that grete aventure,
So was sche Sorweful, J ȝow Ensure.
and thus jn Morneng and wrathe sche fyl jn slepe,

all about blessing and light.

and al the goodmannes lore sche forȝete:
bothe of hire blessyng and Ek of lyht
sche clene forȝat that jlke Nyht.

564. MS. *his* for *hir'*; cf. the footnotes to ll. 147, 320, 948, 4648.
582, 586. *of, lore* added above the line.

thanne was the devel ful of joye, — The devil,
and thowhte fulsone hire to anoye.
"now," quod the devel, "tyme it is, — seizing the opportunity,
For sche hath forȝeten hire lore, j-wys,
Bothe Mynde of God and of Hire Maister Also, — [leaf 91 *a*]
therfore it is hygh tyme that j now go.
Now myhten we wel don owre dever,
Owre Man to putten *with*-jnnen hire her."
Anon this devel that hadde Swich Myht
with wo*m*me[n] To compenyen bothe day & Nyht,
To this goode Maiden wente he anon, — defiles her in her sleep.
and Redy hym Made that dede to don,
and on hire he Engendred, as j ȝow telle,
a Mer*v*eillous child ful·schortly and snelle.
Anon as that Maiden conceyved was,
the devel hym wente owt of that plas;
and that Mayden tho awook anon, — On awakening, immediately after,
whanne that the devel hadde thus j-don.
and Evene Jn hire awakyng
this goodman hadde sche Jn Remembryng,
and took vp hire hond and gan hire to blesse,
& seide: "o seinte Marye, what is thisse? — she discovers her disgrace,
and what Man*er* of thing Js me betyd,
Sethen that j leide me vppon My bed?
Me thenkyth, apeyred welsore am J,
Sethen j me here leyde, ful trewly.
wherfore, blessid lady, j preye to the, — prays to the Virgin,
So that to thy sone thow preye for me,
that on Me he wolde haven pyte
and from the fals Enemy defenden Me."
tha*n*ne, wha*n*ne sche hadde don this dede,
vpe sche Ros owt of that stede, — and gets up to look for the perpetrator.
and wende han fownde*n* that Jche wyht
that hire so hadde deceyved thike Nyht.
So that to hire chamberdore sche wente ano*n*, — Finding the door still locked,
and it fond fast schet & not vndon,
lyk as sche hadde schet yt to-fore,
and non wyht ne fond sche thore.

598. MS. *wōme*.

and the room empty,

thanne furthere to serche cam jn hire thowht,
but al that avayllede thanne hire ryht nowht.

she understands that it must have been the devil.

thanne cam jt jn hire mynde anon
that the enemy hire hadde ouergon.
thanne ful mochel sorwe gan sche make,
whanne that verraylly sche gan wake.
sche besowhte god with humble chere
that jn this world neuere schamed sche were.

At daybreak, when the intruders have left,

and whanne it was the lyht of day,
the devel hire Soster thanne ladde away,
For sche hadde wel j-sped hire arende,
wherfore thedyr he gan hire sende.
and whanne that hire Sostir thens was gon,

she unlocks her door, sends for two women,

owt of hire chambre sche cam anon,
and cleped hire Servaunt ful hastelye,
and bad hym faste to hire hye.
thanne thus to hym tho gan sche telle:
"Go jnto towne, and not ne dwelle,
and bidde swiche two wommen to me hye,
& that they to me comen hastelye!"
Anon as they comen bothe jn fere,
thanne hem cowde sche maken non chere,

and goes with them to the hermit,

but evene with hem took the ryhte weye
To hire confessour, alle thre, jn feye.
and whanne hire confessour hire gan beholde,

who is surprised at the sight of her.

Jn his herte he merveillede many folde,
and to that womman thanne gan he to say:
"hyderward the aryveth som gret affray."
thanne seide this womman to hym aȝe:
"Sire, j trowe that it may ful wel be,

[leaf 91b]

For me Js be-falle A destyne
That neuere fyl to womman but to me,
and am J here comen to ȝow
Som good cownseille to taken of ȝow.

After reminding him of his promises of forgiveness

For toforn tymes han ȝe me told,
thowgh a body Jn synne were neuer so bold,
and he be schreven, and repente also,

643. *tho* over struck-out *thanne*.
650. *thre*, *r* corrected from *e*.

and don the penaunce that longeth þerto,
his Synnes forȝoven to hym scholen be;
Thus tolde ȝe me, Sire, ful Sykerle.
Sire, J haue Synned and that Ryht sore,
as j haue told ȝow ferst before,
For the Enemy hath deceyved me,
as J schal ȝow tellen, ful seker[l]e.
Jt happed, My Soster cam Me vnto,
and me wrowhte bothe care & wo,
and how that sche wraththed me ful jlle,
tyl that to my chambre j wente vntylle
al ful wroth and of hevy chere,
and faste My dore J schette there.
and for the grete wraththe that j am jnne,
Me forto blessen J gan to blynne,
and forȝat what J scholde do,
which aftyr torned me to Mochel wo.
and whanne that J of my Sleepe awook,
and Remembraunce to me took,
thanne fond J that defowlyd J was,
and my Maydenhot aweye Jn that plas.
thanne serched j my chambre al abowte,
and Non wyht ne fond, with-owten dowte,
Ne wiste ho it hadde me do,
From that owr ȝit hider-to.
And, Sire, al thus Engyned am J,
wherfore to God and ȝow J crye Mercy,
that thowgh my body J-tormentyd be,
ȝit that my sowle be not lost Jn non degre."
thanne herkened this good man Everydel
al that to hym sche seyde, ful wel,
but he beleved it non thyng,
For, Sekyr, he held it for a lesing,
For he ne herde nevere to-fore
of swich a thing speken, sethen he was bore.
thanne answerid hire this good man agayn:
" Ful of the devel thou art, ful pleyn,
and the devel js fer with-Jnne the.

664 for those who repent and do penance,
668 she acknowledges that she has sinned
672 by being angry
676 and forgetful,
680 which has led to her being disgraced
684 by an unknown
688 creature.
692 The hermit, incredulous,
696
700 rebukes her,

670. MS. *fekere.*

and says that confession and penance are not for liars.

how scholdest thou thanne confessed be
other ony penaunce of me take,
whanne swiche lesinges þou dost me make? 704
owther how scholde j ȝeven the ony penaunce,
whanne j knowe wel thou makest variawnce?
For jn that degre was neuere womman jnto this day
From hire hire maydenhot taken away, 708
but ȝif sche knew, Felte, other Sye,
ho that it hadde don, Sekerlye.
and thow makest me to beleve
Swich a thing as thow myht not preve." 712

But the girl protests she has told the truth.

Thanne answerid this womman ageyn
and seide: "So god haue part on me, pleyn,
and also kepe my body from torment,
as trowthe j haue Seid ȝow, verament." 716

The hermit then

thanne answerid this good man to hire tho:
"And it be lyk as thou seyst me vnto,
thow schalt wel knowen, and j Jn fere,
er that come fulliche the ende of þe ȝere. 720

lets her atone for her disobedience

But thou hast broken thin obedyence,
and aȝens me don ful gret defense,
[leaf 91 c] And broken my comaundement
that J comanded the, verament; 724
Wherfore penaunce thou schalt haue
Jn amendement thy Sowle to Save:

by fasting,

Every fryday thow most Faste
and to the taken but on repaste. 728

for her incredible commerce

& Jn manere that thou luxvre hast do,
which that myn herte Nyl not concenten therto,
how scholde [j] þanne ony penaunce leyn on the,
but that j knew the certeynte? 732
For it were to lytel, al dayes of thy lyve
ȝif that algates J scholde the Schryve."
thanne seide this woman to hym ageyn:

(fully resigned as she is)

"what evere ȝe me chargen, Jn certeyn, 736
J schal it don with ful good wylle,
what so evere to me ȝe putten vntylle."
thanne seide this goodman to hire ageyn:

731. MS. *fcholde þāne.*

"To goddis Mercy thou takest the, pleyn,
and axest cownseyl of holy chirche,
only goddis comaundement forto wirche,
and hym to worschepen with al thy Myht
that aȝens the devel for the gan fyht,
and bowht the with his precious blood,
and for the deyde vppon the Rood.
thow seist that thou art ful of Repentaunce
and forsakest alle Lecherie, with-owten variaunce,
and that thou neuere dedist amys,
but as jn thy sleepe behapped the this
wherfrom non wyht May hem defende,
but that ȝif god the bettere grace hem sende?"
and vppon this, chast sche gan hire swere,
and to him seide, ȝif it so were,
To-Forn God hire borwgh to be,
that sche be not dampned jn non degre—
"For this Synne that j haue do,
owt of this world whanne j go fro."

by perfect devotion to God and His Holy Church.

He questions her once more,

and she swears to her innocence.

Thus hire penaunce Resceyved sche thanne,
that vppon hire leyde this good Manne,
and Resceyved it ful humblely,
as sche that for hire Synnes was sory.
tho this goodman hire blessed anon,
and forward with hire he gan to gon.
"and algates in the love of jesu crist
loke thou Evere more that thou tryst!"
So that he ladde hire forth be the hond
To the haly water stope, J vndirstond,
and dide hire drynken þer-offen, þat he myhte se,
a gret drawht jn the Name of the Trenite,
and holy water caste vppon hire there,
and bad hire not forȝeten jn non Manere—
"al that j have now comanded the,
loke thou it do, where so thou be.
and whanne thou hast ony Nede of Me,
here schalt thou me fynden, ful Sykerle!"

The hermit then blesses her,

takes her to the Holy Water,

repeats his command-ments,

744. MS. *forthe*; thus often.
746. *deyde*, the first *e* through correction.

and ȝit he Enjoyned hire more over tho
alle þe good dedis that sche scholde do,
and sends her home. and thus he be-tawht hire to God almyht,
and hom aȝen sche wente anon Ryht.
The devil rages. thanne, whanne the devel aspide al this,
and that his pray he scholde thus Mis,
thanne was the cursede schrewe wondir wroth,
that he to hire was thanne so loth.
After two months, So dwelled sche there two monthes oþer thre,
and ful holy lif ladde, ful Sekerle,
her condition is noticed. Tyl that sche gan to barnysche ryht faste,
[leaf 91 *d*] And Was Aspied Atte laste,
Before friends and relations, where-offen hire Frendes angred ful sore,
and so dyde sche ȝit wel more,
she protests her innocence & seyde: "so god haue *mercy* on Me,
J ne kan not weten how it scholde be."
thanne seiden hire Frendis to hire tho:
"why, han there so many mèn knowen ȝow so,
that ȝe ne weten hos Jt is?
now Mafey, thanne this goth amys!"
time after time, "thanne preye j god that j neuere deliuered be,
ȝif j knew Evere of Manes compeyne,
othyr Evere wyste of this aventure,
how to me jt is comen, j ȝow Ensure."
but they disbelieve her, thanne hire Frendis blessid hem Echon,
and to hire they seyden anon:
"this thyng ne Myhte nevere be
be ȝow ne be non womman, Sikirle.
but on him, j trowe, ȝe troste,
that he ȝow Excusen Moste;
But, Jn Sekyr, Jt wele not be,
werfore vs sore Repentyth, Sekyrle;
and point out her sure fate. For also sone as the jvge it wot,
anon, with-owten Faille, deyen ȝe Mot."

Thanne, whanne this woman herde this,
Ful sore dismayed Jt was, J-wys,
and seyde: "So god of My Sowle haue *Mercy*,

778. MS. *that ſche hadde don & ſcholde do.*

J neuere ne knew ne sawh that Mannes body
that me hath don this jlke dede,
as jn alle my werkis so god me spede!"
thanne wenten hire frendis from hire anon,
and for a fool these wommen helden hire Echon.
"Now certes, fowle loste is 3oure bewte,
that thus han jt lost jn Swiche degre!"
whanne that sche herde these wommen thus speke,
anon to hire confessour gan sche to Reke,
and tolde hym of this wommans answere,
as that to hire sche hadde Seyde Ere.
anon as this good Man Sawh that sche
Qwyk with childe was, certeinle,
and Mochel he Merveilled of this chaunce,
& anon axede hire of that penaunce—
"that to-forn tyme the joyned j for this,
hast thow it don?" "3e, leve Sire, j-wis,
that haue j don, Syre, with-owten faille!"
"but cam he Evere sethen, the owht to asaille,
owthir trespacedest þou Euere ony More,
but only that thou hast told me be-fore,
Ne neuere but onys jt cam to the?"
"No, so me good helpe, Sire, Sikerle!"

When she perseveres,

they consider her a fool.

The afflicted woman repairs to the hermit,

who asks about her penance,

and whether the devil has annoyed her again.

Whanne that the goodman herde hire thus telle
Of this aventure, how it befelle,
anon a book he took to hym tho,
and þis Mater jn Scripture he let thrynne do.
"Now be 3e Sewr what j schal say:
anon as this child is born, jn fay,
of on thing j schal knowe, certeyn:
3if þat ony tale 3e han tolde me jn veyn.
and 3if to me 3e han Mad a lesyng,
Ful Siker 3e ben of 3oure hyndryng;
and 3if to me the sothe han 3e told,
Jt schal 3ow helpen Many fold,
For thanne ful Syker Mown 3e ben
that 3e scholen nethir deth felen ne sen.
but 3it gret drede 3e mown hauen a throwe,
For anon as the justice doth it knowe,

The hermit takes a book, and writes down all these things.

The truth, he says, shall be known at the birth of the child,

and accordingly she shall perish

or be saved.

[leaf 92 *a*]
Anon they Welen to-gederys conseylle,
For the impending trial
and 3ow for-juggen for here avaylle,
and seyn that ded scholen 3e be,
For that 3e han trespaced Jn avowtre.
but that anon as they han 3ow take,
doth me to wetene for 3owre owne sake,
he promises her his help,
and j schal comen to 3ow jn Socowrenge,
and god schal ben thanne 3oure helpinge;
For, Seker, 3e mown ben þerto bold,
and it be as 3e han me told."
thanne seyde this good man to hire tho:
and sends her home again.
"A3en to 3oure hows hom that 3e go,
and loke, good lif that 3e lede,
For to a good ende jt wyle 3ow spede."
and thus wente sche hom ageyn,
as j 3ow sey nowe, Jn certeyn,
and ful benyngnely lyvede there,
When the judges are informed,
Tyl that it cam the justice to the ere.
thanne comen [they] jnto the Same town
onliche for this Wommannes enchesown,
and þere sche was taken and to-forn hem browht,
to weten 3if sche cowde excusen hire owht.
and imprison her,
Whanne sche was taken and jn preson don,
sche sent aftyr this good man anon,
and he thedyr cam jn ful gret hye,
as faste as [he] myht gon, Sekerlye;
and thider cam he Neuere so sone,
that to-foren the justice sche was browht anone.
the hermit speaks with them,
The justices clepeden this good man,
and tolden hym how that sche seide than,
For sche hem tolde, ful certeynly,
that sche knew nevere of Mannes compeny.
"Trowe 3e," quod the justice thanne,
"that this myhte ben with-owten feleschepe of manne?"
thanne seide to hem this goodman ageyn:
"j sey not that j thenke now, jn certeyn,

853. The last word was miswritten, blotted out, and written once more. 866. MS. *fforto*.
871. *thãne* corrected from *and*; the pronoun omitted.
878. MS. *as myht*.

but and ȝe welen don aftyr me,
at this tyme juged schal sche not be,
Neþer not as longe as gret sche Js,
ȝif that ȝe wele don be myn avys.
For it were Neyther Skele ne Resown
To putten that child to ony distrocciown,
that neuere jn non wyse deservyd the ded,
ȝif owghtes that ȝe welen don be my Red."
" Syre, we scholen don as we ȝow say:
aftyr ȝow we scholen werken this day."
" ȝif that ȝe welen werken aftyr me,"
quod this goodman thanne, " Sykirle,
jnto a strong warde scholen ȝe hire putte,
and strong lokes vppon hire Schette,
and putte hire jnto a strong towr,
and with hire tweyne wommen for hire honour,
hire forto helpen at hire deliueraunce
and hire to socowren jn that chawnce;
and that owt from hire mown they not gon,
No more thanne sche may from hem don;
and that they there to-gederis be,
tyl that child be born ful vtterle,
and tyl that it may it somwhat Susteyne;
this js my Reed, j sey ȝow certaygne.
thanne scholen ȝe knowen and sen more thing
thanne ȝe owht knowen at this begynneng,
and forjuggen mown ȝe thanne this wommanne
as lyk that ȝe fynden Resown thanne.
This js my conseille, and ȝe welen it do,
And ȝif not ȝe Wylen, J parte ȝow fro."
thus wrowhten they thanne al jn fere
aftyr that goodmannes cownseyl there,
and putten hire jn-to [a] strong towr,
& with hire tweyne wommen for hire honour,
Swich as to mester scholde be
That longeth to wommans parturite,
and a Fenestre open be Enchosown
here vyaundes to taken bothe vpe & down,

and advises them to put off her trial,

for the innocent child's sake,

letting her stay in a strong tower,

with two women to attend her,

till the child shall be born and be strong enough.

[leaf 92 *b*]

The judges follow his advice.

899. ȝe added above the line. 921. MS. *jn to ſtrong.*

and what Necessaryes hem belonged also,
vpe at that wyndowe to hem taken tho.
and whanne that thus be this goodmannes conseille
jn the towr they weren browht, Sawns faille,
The hermit recommends immediate baptism, thanne spak this good man to hem jn hy,
and to this damysele he seide, trewly:
"Loke that anon as thou delyveryd be,
that faste jt be crystened & smartle;
and a message to be sent to him before the trial. and to-fore the justice whanne þou schalt go,
Loke anon that thou sende me vnto."
and thus jn the towr abod sche there,
A male child is born, tyl sche was deliuered jn hard Manere,
and was deliuered of a knave child,
ugly and rough, that was bothen vnlouely & vn-Myld.
and whanne this child was j-bore,
they Merveilleden gretly that weren thore,
with its father's wits, For it hadde bothe wyt and knowenge
aftyr the schrewed fadris Engendrynge.
but destined to be a servant of God on account of its mother's repentance, but, for the devel wrowhte so falsly,
God to his Evs hath taken jt, trewly,
thorwgh the Modris verray Repentaunce,
and for fulfylleng of hire penance,
and for hire good beleve jn holy chirche,
good deeds, and for the goode dedis that sche dyde wirche,
for that cawse nolde god jn non degre
that the devel with hym Meddelid, Sikirle.
and ȝit the devel mad his Engendryng,
For that of al thinges he scholde haue knowyng,
bothe þat js to comen and that js gon,
For Many Merveilles he thowghte be hym to don.
but oure lord knew the Repentance
Of his Modyr, with-owten variaunce,
and innocence of the whole thing. and wiste ful wel that aȝens hire wille
that this aventure cam hire vntylle.
For the goode lord knew ful wel
that be hire wil sche synnede neuere a del,
and hym graunted bothe wit and knowenge
Of Many thinges that weren comenge;

931. MS. *an hy.* 948. *hir'* corrected from *his.*
955. *ād* corrected afterwards from *an.*

thus wolde God that he scholde knowe
of Manye thinges vppon a rowe.
For ȝif goddis wille it hadde j-be,
the devel schold han had his partye
and to God ȝelden that was his Ryht,
but that it likede to this lord of Myht
hym to taken jnto his power
and holych owt of the develis daunger.

Otherwise the devil would have had his share in the child.

Thus was there thanne this child j-bore,
of wheche these wommen dredden sore,
For more Rowghere that child it was
thanne Kvere they Syen jn ony plas.
they schewed it thanne to þe Modyr anon,
sche took vpe hire hond and blessed hire thusson.
and Seyde anon: "so Crist me Spede,
For this child haue J gret drede."
Thanne seyden to Hyre these Wommen A-geyn:
"So for hym schalt thou suffren ful gret peyn."
thanne comanded the Modir there
down it to leten Jn alle Manere—
"and that j-cristened anon it be,
thus j ȝow preye for charyte."
thanne axeden these wommen of hire anon
what Name they scholden leyn hym vppon.

The women in attendance are frightened at the sight of the infant.

So is the mother.

[leaf 92 *c*]

She has him christened at once,

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

anon leten they down this child there,
and that anon j-cristened it were,
and that jt Named scholde j-be
aftyr his grauntfadyr, ful sekerle,
whiche goodman that hyghte Merlyne,
that the devel gan so Engyne.
and thus this child j-cristened was,
and deliuered aȝen to þe Modris plas.

and calls him by her father's name, Merlin.

Thanne thus the Modyr Gan hym Norree,
tyl ten Mounthes old he was, Sekerle;
and with-jnne tho x mounthes he was so bold,

The child grows very fast.

968. *partye*, *y* corrected from *e*.
999. *mouthes* afterwards crossed out and replaced by *dayes*.

that thyke tyme he semede two ȝeres old.
After 18 months the attendants want to go home,
and whanne xviij mou*n*thes were*n* fulliche j-past,
To the Modyr seiden thes wo*m*men jn hast:
"dame, fulfayn wolde we hennes ben
and to owre owne place hom gon aȝen,
For certein thinges we han to do;
Sykerly, dame, we wylen the fro."
thanne spak aȝen the Modyr anon:
but are persuaded to stay yet for a while.
"ȝif it so be, ȝe from me gon,
anon be jugement j schal ben ded,
For j ne knowe non other Red."
thanne wepte this Modyr and Made sory chere,
and preyde hem *with* hire abyden ȝit there.
thanne ȝit stylle they gonne abyde,
and to a *prevy* wyndowe wente *þat* tyde.
and the Modir this child gan beholde,
The mother weepingly says to the child in her arms
& there jn hire armes sche gan it folde;
Anon ful tendirly wepte sche thanne,
& thus sche seide to this ȝong Manne:
"a, Faire sone," quod sche thanne tho,
that she must die for its sake,
"for the moste j suffre bothe deth & wo,
and to me ben j-put ful Mochel hard peyne,
the wheche is wrong, god wot certeyne.
For there Nis non Man, but god alone,
that whot how this cause doth gone;
as nobody believes her.
but this non Man wil beleven, certeinle,
wherfore j moste nedis ded now be,
and thus *with* gret wrong j schal suffre ded."
Sore wepyng thus seide sche jn that sted.
And as the Modyr this Mone Gan Make,
The child says she shall not.
hire sone on hire lokede *with* Eyn so blak
and seide: "modir, dismaye the nowht,
for fore me schalt *þ*ou neue*re* to deth be browht."
whanne that the Modyr herde hym so speke,
In her fright, she drops it; the child cries, the women rush thither.
For drede sche let it owt of hire armes Reke,
so that for drede the child fyl a-down,
and gan to cryen with a gret Sown.
thanne come*n* anon these wo*m*men, certayn,

1001. *moūthes* afterwards crossed out and replaced by *dayes*.

and wenden, the Modyr the child wolde han slayn,
and they axeden hire, why the child ferde so.
"for, sekerly, j was neuere so wo,
Nethere j ne hadde neuere so gret fere;
That made hym fallen owt of myn armes here,
and that made hym so lowde to crye.
But of A Merveyl J sey 3ow, sekerlye,
that this child hath spoken to Me;
3e wolde han wondred hit forto han se!"
"what, spak thanne he the vnto?"
"3e, sekerly, now dyde he so."
"what seide he thanne? telle vs now here."
"that Schal j doon with Ryht good chere;
he seide j scholde neuere ded for hym be;
thus he me Seyde, ful Sykerle."
"but Seyde he ony othir thing?"
"Nay, forsothe, with-owten lesyng."
thanne gonne they the child to kyssen and brase,
3if it to hem wolde speken jn that plase;
but non word of him ne cowde they gete,
thowgh they him kyste neuere so swete.
but on a day þe modir calde hem hire vnto,
and thus to hem sche seide tho:
"Manase 3e me for hym vppon a day,
and to hym Make som gret afray,
and seith that for hym j schal be brent,
be stoned to dethe and al j-schent."
For the Modyr desirede ful sore
That to-forn hem wolde he speken thore.
"a ful gret Rowthe it is of the,"
Seiden these wommen, "ful sekerle,
that so fair a body as thou art on,
of hyde, of hewe, of flesch & bon,
that thou schalt for this fowle thing
ben browht so sone to a fowl Endyng.
bettyr it hadde have neuere be bore
thanne thy faire body for hym scholde be lore.'
"Now certes," quod this Merlyne tho,

The mother tells them of all,

[leaf 92 *d*]

that the child has spoken,

and what it has said.

They then try to make it speak to them also, but in vain.

Later on, the mother advises them to speak, in her son's presence, of her death for his sake.

So they do,

and Merlin speaks angrily.

1047. *he* added above the line. 1057. MS. *hem*.
1059. *modir* added above the line. 1061. MS. *hyn*.

" ȝe lyen, false schrewes, bothe two,
of that ȝe han my Modyr told,
for þerto schal neuere man be so bold."
They are frightened, and say he must be a devil. and whanne they syen hym so on take,
For drede and sorwe they gonne to qwake,
and seiden: "This ne may non child be:
Jt is the devel, ful Sykirle.
that we han seid, doth it vs here telle;
we supposen, it be a devel of helle."
thanne aposid they him of wordis Mo,
and thus to hem he Seide vnto:
He replies by telling them about their secret sins. "ȝe han don wel moche More Synne
thanne my modyr, that is here with-jnne."
Anon they Merveylled mochel More,
that he cowde tellen thinges, weren don to-fore.
" we schole gon tellen to hem that be-Nethe be,
how this child doth Speken, Sekyrle."
They run to the window, and inform the people. thanne to this wyndowe comen they anone,
and cleped the peple to hem fulsone,
and tolden how þat the child spak there,
& howgh that he seyde and jn what Manere.
thussone so wyde this tydyng sprong,
The judge hears about it, that to the jugge it cam Er owht long,
where-offen he Merveillede wondir sore,
that jn swich Maner the child spak thore.
thanne bespak the justice anon:
"Now were it tyme, juggement to don!"
and sente anon to that Jayller
That jn the towre hem kepte ther,
and fixes the day for her trial. that at the Ende of xl dawes
to bringen hire forth to han hire lawes.
whanne the Modyr of Merlyn herde this,
That set was the day of hire, j-wys,
Fvl mochel Sorwe made sche thanne,
She sends for the hermit. and sente anon aftyr this good Manne,
[leaf 93 *a*] That Hire Was Wont to confessen before;
aftyr hym sente sche to comen to hire thore.
Thus dwelde sche algates stille

1104. *That* through correction at the end.

the dayes of juggement to fulfille.
and whanne they weren past Everichon
Except viij dayes, that weren not gon,
thanne lyvede sche jn sorwe and care,
and wiste neuere thanne how sche schold fare,
but that sche scholde brend j-be;
sche knew non othir, ful Sykerle.
and al this tyme wente hire sone, jn feye,
abowte jn the towr and him gan to pleye.
thanne seiden these wommen to him anon:
"Ful litel thenkest þou what is to don,
and how this wyke, ful Sikerle,
thy Modir for the moste nedis brend j-be."
Thanne be-spak Merlyn anon
to his Modir there thussone:
"Now, faire Modyr, j 3ow praye,
For me non thing that 3e dismaye,
for there js non man on lyve here
that 3ow schal demen jn non Manere,
Neþer neuere 3ow juggen to þe ded,
whiles that j lyve, jn non sted,
Ne neuere non deth to suffren, j-wys,
Sauf onlich be god, that almyhty js."
whanne the Modyr vndirstood this,
thanne was sche ful of joye & blis,
and seide: "this child moste nedis wys be,
Swich thynges to tellen now, Sykerle."
thus bod sche tyl the same day
that to juggement scholde sche gon, jn fay,
that owt of the towr was sche do,
and the tweyne wommen with hire also,
and hire sone in hyre arm sche bar,
tyl to-fore the jugges that sche cam thar.
thanne the justice at that tyde
thike two women token beside,
and of hem axeden, with-owten lak,
3if it were soth that the child spak.
thanne tolden hem tho wommen verrayly

1116 During her grief and anguish,
1120 her son is unconcerned.
1124 The women reprove him.
1128 He tells his mother again not to be afraid,
1132 for she shall not die.
1136
1140 On the appointed day,
1144 she appears before the judges, who
1148 ask the women if the child had really spoken,

1139. MS. *feiden*.

how that he to hem Spak apertly.
and remark that much wisdom is required to save its mother. thanne seide the jugge to hem ageyn :
" ful mochel moste he konnen & knowen, certayn,
3if he schole owht his Modyr Save,
Mochel More konneng moste he have."
and be this jlke same tyme,
as that it happede the owr of pryme,
The hermit, who has arrived in the meantime, this goodman to hire was comen ful Ryht,
that hire thanne scholde cownceillen aryht.
thanne seide on of the jugges hire vnto :
" hast þou ony cownseil, what wylt thou do ?
for Martirdom thou most Suffren here ;
good cownseil to the now profyt were."
thanne answerid this womman agayn :
" with this good man wolde j speken fulfayn."
and they hire 3oven leve therto.
has a private consultation with his confessant, So jnto a chambre they gonne to go,
and hire sone beleft with-owte
amonges the peple, a ful gret Rowte ;
and with speche they gonnen hym asaylle,
but lytel owther nowht it dyde avaylle.
and al this while that jt was so,
his Modir hire confessour spak vnto.
& whanne sche hadde told hym al hire wylle,
[leaf 93 b] Thanne spak the confessour Hire vntylle,
during which he also is assured that the child has spoken. and axede hire 3if it certeyn were
that hire sone spak so there.
" 3e, sire," sche seide, " certeynly,
to me hath he spoken, ful verrayly."
" Jn goddis Name," quod this good Man tho,
" j hope, som Merveilles it wele tornen vnto."
She reappears in court, thanne comen they owt bothe jn fere,
and comen jnto place as þe jugges were,
and took hire child jn hire armes two,
Ryht so to-fore the jugge sche gan to go.
thus stood sche to-forn hem, certaygne.
anon the jugge gan hire Refreyne,
Is asked about her child's father, and axede hire ho þat the fadyr were
of that child that sche held there.
thanne answerid the Modyr with gret pite :

"j wot not othir but ded to be;
but so god on my Sowle haue Mercye,
Medlid j neuere with mannes compenye,
Ne neuere j wiste ho þat the fadyr was,
Neþer neuere knew j Man jn that cas,
Ne Neuere obeyed to non Man, Sykerle,
that sweche thinges scholde don by me."
"ȝe, ȝe," quod this justices tho,
"we konnen not beleven that it is so
as thou dost vs to vndirstonde;
Jt was neuere provid jn non londe."
thanne tooken the jugges these wommen on side,
and axeden ȝif swich a thing myhte be-tyde,
that a woman a child scholde bere
whiche neuere jn Mannes compeny ne were.
thanne seiden they: "Nay, ful sikyrle,
with-owten Mannes compenye it myhte not be."
Thanne seiden these jugges to hyre ageyn
that—"ded nedys most ȝe ben, certayn,
for thus wommen seyn, trewely,
that with-owten Mannes compeny
a child neuere scholdest thou have;
thus they me seyn, so god me save!"
thanne owt of his Modris armes stirt Merlyne anon,
and angerlich seide toforn hem Echon:
"that schalt þou Nevere, justice, bringen abowte,
My Modyr to brennen, with-owten dowte,
For sche ne hath not deservid therto.
and ȝit more J schal sein the also,
that ȝif trewe jostice thou schost be
To alle that han don avowtre
with oþere thanne with here lordis, certeyn,
of mo thanne of two partes that is here pleyn,
thow schost hem brennen al jn fere,
More than twey partes of wommen that ben here.
and my Modyr was neuere ȝit Gylty
with non Man jn Swich Maner of foly;
but swich a body as hire was take,

and declares that she knows not.

The judges say they cannot believe her,

ask also the two women on the point,

and declare she must die.

Then Merlin suddenly intervenes.

His mother is guiltless, he says,

but more than two-thirds of the women present are guilty.

1194. MS. *compenye.*

sche hath forth browht with gret wrake.
and, Sire justice, but thou leve me,
axe this good man here openle."

The hermit is asked, and testifies her innocence,

the justices axeden this goodman tho
3if it be—"as he seith vs vnto."
"3e," quod this good man, "ful Sekerly,
sche hath me told ful feithfully,
ful often & with ful weping chere,
that jn Mannes compenye neuere sche were,
but that welfowle Encombred sche was

the devil being the offender.

with the fals Enemy jn hire owne plas,
hire thus Encombrede jn slepyng;
[leaf 93 c] And vppon My Sowle to taaken this thing.
but jn alle my lyf here before
herde j nevere of swich thing spoken ore."

Merlin reminds the hermit of the book.

thanne spak Merlyne a3en Ryht tho,
and this goodman spak vnto:
"3e han it don j-wreten Jn a book,
My concepsiown, and 3e wyle lok,
and þerby mown 3e ful wel knowe
the lyveng of my modir al this throwe."
"thou seist soth," quod this good man,
"lytel wot thy Modyr whens þat thou cam."

The women are questioned,

thanne cleped they forth these two wommen,
and axeden hem whe þer it were so then,
& also Enqwerede aftyr thengendrure
and aftyr his birthe, j 3ow Ensure.

and their testimony agrees with the book.

3if that the goode holy Mannes book
and they acorden, they wylen look.
So that these wommen and the book acordid wel,
of the goodmannes wrytyng, Everydel.

Yet the judges are not satisfied.

3it thanne seide the justices tho,
For this scholde sche be qwyt neuere the Mo.

Merlin, growing angry,

Thanne Merlyn gan to wraththen hym Sore,
and ful angerly to the justice spak thore:
"J knowe moche Bettere My fadyr, Jn fay,
thanne thou dost thyn, J dar wel Say,

1239. *welfowle*, *w* through correction.
1249. *3e* added above the line.

and thy MODYR knoweth bettere, certeinly,
ho that the be-gat, j telle þe feythfully,
Bettere thanne MY modyr, j sey ȝow pleyn,
For sche knew neuere my Fadyr, jn certeyn.
and therfore, Sire Justice, J telle to the
that thy MODYR MORE worthy Js, brent to be,
For sche is fals to hire lord so dere,
and so was neuere my modyr jn non MANERE."
thanne was this justice wondyr angry tho,
and thus to that child he Spak vnto:
"ȝif of my MODIR Swich thing thow konne seye,
J schal the holden for trewe, jn feye."
thanne seide MERlyn aȝen to hym there:
"Ful wel knowe j thy MODRYS MANERE,
that moche MORE sche hath decerved to be ded
thanne EVERE dyde my MODYR jn ony sted.
and but ȝif thou fynde that j trewe seye,
hardylich let ELLIS my modyr deye."
thanne seide the justyse to hym ageyn:
"ȝif thou konne proven that thou seist pleyn,
Thy modyr from brenneng schalt thou save,
and al thyn owne axeng thou schalt have . . .
but NATHELES, and it be as thou dost telle,
thanne schal j don brenne bothe ful snelle,
bothe MYN owne MODYR and EK thyn,
and Bryngen hem bothe to a schort fyn."
"that schal NEUERE lyn Jn thy powere
MY MODYR to deth to putten here,
whiles that thou lyvest here, ony threwe,
For ȝif nede be, mo Skiles j schal the Schewe."

brings an accusation against the chief judge's mother.

The irate judge tells him to prove it, and his mother shall be free.

Merlin says he can.

The judge first renews his promise,

then threatens to burn both the mothers.

Merlin defies him.

Thanne anon RESPYT gonnen they take
For the justices MODRIS Sake,
XV dayes thanne next Sewenge,
hire forto bringen to Rekenenge,
and diden hire seke bothe fer & NYGH,
To hire answere to comen apertly.

A summons is sent to the judge's mother.

1268. *that, at* blurred. 1274. *so* added above the line.
1284. *modyr, r* on erasure.
1295. *threwe,* the first *e* corrected from *o*.

In the meantime, Merlin remains silent.

and jn the Mene while they Enqwered there
of that child Jn diuers Manere,
but Neuere to hem wolde he speken non word,
Tyl the day cam of here acord,
and whanne this womman comen was,
[leaf 93 *d*] The Justices Modyr, Jnto that plas.

On her arrival, Merlin is confronted with her before the people.

thus cam the justices Modyr thedyr jn hye;
thanne Merlyn was after sent, trewlye,
owt of preson Jn hasty Manere
to-forn the peple to comen there.
thanne seide the justice to Merlyn tho:
"lo, here my Modir, that thou spoke offen so!"

He suggests more private proceedings, indoors.

thanne seyde the child to hym ageyn:
"thou Ne art ful wys, j telle the pleyn!
Tak thy Modyr jnto a chambre anon
and of thy beste frendes, and þedir ȝe gon,
and þere to-foren ȝow J schal come
Jn excuseng of my modyr al & Some,
which that knoweth god almyhty
and also hire confessour, ful sothfastly."

Nobody objects.

thanne abasched weren they Sore,
that they ne cowde Speken wordis no more.

When in the room, Merlin puts some preliminary questions to the judge,

thanne seide Merlyne to hem Echon:
"ȝif j delyvere my Modir of this cryme anon,
schal sche thanne ony more jn warde be
for ȝow oþer for ony of this Meyne?"
thanne answerid the justice to hym ageyn:
"sche schal ben ful qwyt thanne, jn certayn."
thanne seide the justyce to Merlyn tho:
"Now sey to my Modyr that thou kanst do,
be whiche thy Modir qwit scholde be;
haue j-do, and sey on here to-fore ME!"

and indicates the connection of the two cases.

"j schal non thing vppon thy Modyr seye
but that schal my Modyr aqwyten, jn good feye.
and ȝif sche have forfeted wyllyng,
j wile that thou to deth hire bryng.
hast not thou Enswred Me
and also my Modyr, ful certeinle,

1315. MS. *juſt* crossed out after *the*.
1320. *al*, *l* corrected from *c*.

ȝif j may hire delyveren here,
qwit to Gon jn alle Manere?"
"that is ful trewe," quod the justice,
"and thou it conne don be ony wyse."
"Now, justice," quod Merlyne thanne anon
"My Modyr thou acusest to-forn vs Echon,
For that j am of hire j-bore,
and þat sche Not ho me Engendrid thore.
but j kan bettere my Modir telle
hos sone that j was, ful snelle,
thanne thou kanst, j dar wel say,
ho was thy fadyr, be ony way.
and also thy Modyr the can tellen bettir, j-wis,
ho that the be-gat and thy fadyr Js,
thanne My Modyr can tellen Me,
oþer Evere cowde jn ony degre,
hos Sone that j was,
sche cowde neuere tellen jn non plas."
Thanne spak þe justice to his Modir dere:
"hos sone was j, that stond now here?
was j not ȝowre sone Jn trewe acord
be-twixen ȝow and ȝowre husbonde & lord?"
"A ȝis, fayre Syre, ful Sykerle!
hos sone Ellis scholde ȝe be,
but his sone that now ded Is?
j sey ȝow, dere sone, with-owten Mys."
"dame," quod Merlyne, "ȝow behoveth here
the Sothe to Seyen Jn alle Manere.
For but ȝif thy Sone qwyte now Me
and also my modyr, that here ȝe se,
No More Entermeten j ne schal,
and ȝit scholen we gon qwyt of al!"
"ȝis," quod the justice anon tho,
"Sey on now more what þou canst do."
"Wel," quod Merlyne, "thanne schal J say:
thy fadir is ȝit onlyve thys day
be wytnesse of thin owne Modyr here."
thanne beheld the justice his Modir there.

Merlin then rehearses the accusation brought against his own mother,

and his own accusation against the judge's mother.

The judge asks his mother, if he is not the son of her late husband.

She declares he is.

Merlin exhorts her to tell the truth,

[leaf 94 *a*]

and says that the judge's father is still alive.

1349. *telle* crossed out after *my*.
1370. *modyr*, *o* corrected from *y*.

"jt be-houeth," quod Merlyne, "that ȝe here telle
ho was ȝoure sones fadyr, ful snelle,
For wel ȝe weten, his Fadyr he Nas
Of hym that he supposith jn this plas."
The lady is confused. thanne baschet the Lady wondir sore,
& axede Merlyne hos sone Ellis he wore.
"Ful wel knowest thou," quod Merlyn tho,
"that thou seist, it Nis not So,
Merlin states further that the judge's father is a priest, but a prestis sone of ȝowre he js;
this woste thou wel, with-owten Mys,
be this same tokene, j telle the,
that thou to hym seidest in prevyte.
Ne hadde ȝe but Selde to-gederis leyn,
reveals her intimate conversation with her lover, that to hym thou seydest, ful pleyn,
that be hym with childe thou were;
and he seide: 'Nay, haue ȝe non fere!'
thanne seide he, that scholde neuere be,
Be hym with childe gon, Sykerle.
and for this skele thus seide he, trewelye,
For thou schost Medlen with non Mannes compenye.
and ȝit More dyde he therto:
his noting down of each coition, as often as he with ȝow Medlyd so,
he put jt anon jn Scripture;
that j seye, is soth, j ȝow Ensure.
thanne was jt told to ȝoure lord
of ȝoure Manere, every word,
and her false oaths to her husband. but with fals othes ȝe to hym dyd swere
that it not so was Jn non Manere.
thanne vnnethis wolde ȝe abyde,
but to þe preest wente anon that tyde,
and seiden to hym with-owten wordis Mo:
'Me js be-tyd ful Mochel wo,
that thus with childe be ȝow am j,
J am ful wo-be-gon now, trewly!'
He then asks if it is not true. dame, js not this trowthe, that j now say?
And here to-fore me sey ȝe other Nay!

1383. *baſchet*, *b* apparently through correction.
1387. *of* (?) added above the line; ȝ through correction, blurred.
1394. *he*, *h* corrected from *ſ*.
1396. *childe*, *d* through correction, blurred.

and ȝif thow wylt not the sothe beknowe,
Mochel wers schal j sein aforn al this Rowe." 1416
"Modyr," quod the justice, "is this trewe?" She still denies it.
"what, sone, levest thou this schrewed hewe?"
"A," quod Merlyne, "wylt thou thanne so, Merlin goes on to state
thanne schal j telle what thou dist Mo. 1420
whanne that thou knew certeyn, þou were *with* childe,
thow wentest to purchase, as a womman ful Mylde, that she bought her husband's silence,
be the same preest, thi pes to have,
of thin owne lord, he scholde þe save, 1424
and that his owne it was Eche del,
the wheche was fals, thou knew ful wel.
and sethen that tyme, J sey ȝow here, continued her adulterous life with the priest,
haven ȝe bothe lyved that lyf jn fere, 1428
and ȝit ȝe lyven bothe jn-to this day;
Takith this for trowthe, as j ȝow say.
and the Nyht to-fore that ȝe scholde gone, and spent with him the very last night before her departure.
that preest, to ȝow he cam fulsone, 1432
and browht ȝow a gret pece on the weye,
and thus to ȝow tho gan he seye:
'loke that jn alle thyng ȝe fulfille
that my sone to ȝow schal sein vntylle.'" 1436

Whanne the justices Modyr herde hym so seyn,
and that he seide, was trowthe, ful pleyn,
Thanne gan sche Syghen & Maken gret Mone. Then the judge's
Thanne thus sche thowhte be hire-selve Alone, 1440 [leaf 94 *b*] mother breaks down,
that Nedis the trowthe Moste sche Seye
oþer elles to ben confowndid vtterlye.
thanne hire sone seide to hire ageyn:
"hos sone j am, telleth me now pleyn. 1444
For wel j wot, J am ȝoure child,
& to ȝow j am bothe Mek and Myld.
Telle me now trowthe, j ȝow preye,
of that this child doth here Seye!" 1448
"Now, Swete sone, haue Mercy on Me! and pleads guilty.
as he Seyth, it is, ful Sekyrle."
"ha thanne," quod the justice tho,

1440. *thowhte*, *ht* through correction.
1443. *ſeide* added above the line.

The judge understands that Merlin's mother is innocent,

"Now j se wel how it doth go! 1452
this child knoweth bettere his fadyr, j-wis,
thanne j do Myn, with-owten Mys.
Now se j that it were non Resown
thy Modir oþer the to don distrocciown. 1456

and implores him to name his father.

For for goddis love, telle þou me here
what Maner of wyht thy fadyr were."

Merlin relates

thanne seide Merlyne to hym ageyn:
"that schal j gladliche, jn certeyn, 1460
more for thy love thanne for thy drede,
j sey the certeyn, so god me spede!
Syre, j wele that thou knowe, trewely,

that his father is an evil spirit of the order called "Equibedes,"

that on my Mody[r] Me Engendred the Enemy. 1464
For Sweche Spirites as they be,
ben j-cleped Equibedes, j telle the;
and from the Eyr jnto the Erthe they gon
Swich Maner of werkys here forto don. 1468

and that he has the mental capacities of those spirits to know things past, and to come,

And knowe thou wel, justice, certeinlye,
that j haue bothe here wyt and Memorye,
and by hem knowe j ful wel
thy Modris werkyng Everydel. 1472
For thinges that ben past, j knowe,
and thinges that ben comeng vppon a rowe.
And also it is owre lordis wille
that bothe wit & Memorye j schal have þere-tylle 1476

on God's behalf,

on his behalve, More thanne a Naturel Man
jn this Erththe knoweth oþer kan,

for his pious mother's sake.

for the love of my modir so dere,
that hire penaunce fulfilde here, 1480
that the goodman ȝaf hire jn charge
(sche it fulfylde bothe fully and large);
that so be vertu of hire goodnesse
God graunttyd me ȝit more largesse: 1484
to knowen thynges that weren comenge,
J sey the, justice, with-owten lesynge.

To prove this,

and this schalt þou proven Ryht wel
and the sothe to knowen Every del." 1488

1464. MS. *than on my mody*; in *Engendred* the *e* of the second syllable is corrected from *r*.
1468. *werkys*, *r* corrected from *k*.

Anon he took the justice on syde,
& thus him told that jlke tyde : — he predicts
" Thy Modyr wil discoueren me anone,
come sche hom ones, neuere so sone,
and tellen to him that the be-gat,
alle that j haue to the seid and what.
and whanne that he wot al this,
For drede of þe thanne wyle he fleen, j-wys.
thanne the devel, whos servaunt he hath be,
to a water schal leden hym ful pryvyle,
and þere he schal hym-self distroye,
his owne Sowle to ȝret anoye.
and hereby myhtest þou haue knoweng
that j can tellen of thinges comeng."
" Now, and it be trewe as thou tellest me,
Evere schal j the trosten ful feith-fulle,
and Neuere j schal the Misbeleve
For non Man that owht can on þe preve."

Thanne thus owt of cownseyl gonnen they go, [leaf 94 *c*]
and to-fore the peple come they tho,
and there schewed the justice anon, Sykerle,
that ful wel aqwit his Modyr hadde he,
bothe be good Resown and be Ryht—
" thus hath he his Modyr from the deth now dyht."
thanne joyeden the peple Everychon,
and thankede god he hadde so don.
So thus delyverede Merlyne tho
his Modyr from Brenneng, peyne, & wo.
and Merlyne with the justice belefte Stylle,
For he thowhte to werkyn aftyr his wylle,
and sente tweyne Men with his Modir anon,
To weten how that cawse scholde goon,
also to knowen ȝif it trewe were
that this chyld hath told hym there.
Assone as his Modyr hom comen was,
sche tolde the preest al the cas
of the Merveilles Everychon

1492 1496 1500 1504 1508 1512 1516 1520 1524

the tragic end of the priest.

The judge declares that if that comes true, he will ever believe him.

They go out again to the people,

and Merlin's mother is released.

The people rejoice.

The judge sends two spies to watch his mother.

Arrived home, she tells the priest everything.

1496. MS. *of* þe, added above the line.
1515. *So*, *S* corrected from *a*. 1516. MS. *Brēnnēg*.

that toforn hire sone was seid & don.
Anon as the preest herde of this,
fulsore thanne was he astoned, j-wis,
He is afraid of the judge, and supposid the justice wold hym slo.
thanne wyste he Neuere what to do,
but owt of the town he wente anon,
and drowns himself. Thanne to a Ryvere he cam thus son,
and þere he dyde hym-Self dystroye,
For the justice hym schold not anoye.
lo, thus the devel with hym wrowhte,
tyl that he hadde browht hym to nowhte.
and this openly Syen thike twey Men,
The spies report it to the judge. that hom with that lady comen then;
and whanne to the juge they comen ageyn,
of alle this aventure they tolden hym, certeyn.
& whanne the justice herde al this,
anon he Merveillede ful gretly, j-wis,
and there to Merlyn told it thus sone;
thanne began this Merlyn to lawhen anone.
On Merlin's request, "Now j preye the, justice," quod Merlyn tho,
"that to holy Blase thou wost tellen this vnto,
wich that is My Modris confessour,
a ful holy Man Jn Everych owr."
the judge tells it to the hermit, the holy Blasy. thanne tolde the justice to Blase, ful pleyn,
how that this aventure befyl, certeyn.
thanne wente Merlyn and his Modyr jn fere,
the justice and Blase, alle to-gederis there,
and wente whider hem likede best,
Jnto what place as hem best lest.
Blasy wonders at the child's faculties, This Blasye a worthy clerk he was,
and Mochel Merveille hadde in þat plas
that so ȝong a child as was he,
Swich wit scholde haue jn ony degre,
that but two ȝer and an half he was old,
and that he was so-wis, so Redy, and so bold;
he Merveillede whens it scholde be,
and tests him in many ways. & assaied Merlyne jn ful Many degre.
thanne seide Merlyne to hym ageyn:

1533. *dyſtroye*, the first *y* corrected from *r*.

" þe more that þou me asayeest, jn certeyn,
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
3if thou wilt me trosten and beleve,
of the love of god j schal the preve,
the whiche to Endeles lyf it schal þe brynge,
and thou wilt don aftyr My techinge."
thanne answerede this Blasye ageyn:
" what? toforn this tyme j haue herd seyn
that only the develis sone thou were,
How schost thow thanne swich thy*n*ges Don Here?"
" lo," quod Merlyne, " a custowme it Js
of alle schrewed hertis, J-wys,
that [they] Rathere the Evel tha*n*ne good scholen speke,
on here Em-cristene to ben awreke.
thou seist, the develis sone that j am,
as þou myhtest han seid, fro*m* god þa*t* j cam,
and that he gra*u*nted me bothe wit & Memorye;
what schold it han greved the thus to seye?
For it is goddis wille that j knowe
thinges to-come*n*g vppon a Rowe,
only for the same Enchesown
that þe devel hath me forgon.
and 3it haue j not * Myn Engyne*n*g,
that of kynde j hadde atte begy*n*ne*n*g,
but of me scholen they Neue*r*e han power,
for that han they lost Everywher,
For me to putten jn so worthy a vessel,
of wheche hadde they part neue*r*e a del,
and jn Swich a Mane*r* conceyved they Me,
For they knew not of goddis prevyte.
and þe*r*fore alle j-lost they bene;
of this be thou Seker and not jn wene.
and loke thou beleve that j schal seyn,
For of Merveilles j schal tellen the, ful pleyn,
of whiche thow wylt haue gret Mer*v*eyllyng,

1564 1568 1572 1576 1580 1584 1588 1592 1596

Merlin asks Blasy to trust him.

Blasy reminds him of the fact that he is the devil's son.

[leaf 94 *d*]

Merlin reproves him,

and says he has come from God,

as God has given him divinatory power,

and the devils have lost their share in him.

He asks him again to believe in his predictions,

1564. *a*fayeest, the first *a* squeezed in afterwards.
1567. *Endeles*, *E* partly obliterated. 1575. MS. *that Rathere.*
1585. A participle (*forgon, j-loft, loft*?) is missing.
1592. *they* added above the line.

how sweche wyttes myhte jnto ony man synk.
and write them in a book. Blayse, anon that thow MAke a book,
for here-aftyr many man schal *þer*-on look." 1600
thanne seide Blayse to MERlyne anon:
"A book may j do MAken ful sone,
Blasy conjures Merlin not to deceive him. but j co*n*iowre þe be on god of MYhtes MOst,
which is fadir, sone, & holygost, 1604
that thou NOWht deceyve ME,
Nethir be thy werk ENgyned to be,
Ne to werkyn non thing a*ȝ*ens goddis wylle,
Ne nothyng to don that scholde plesen hym ylle." 1608
Merlin promises to forsake whatever Blasy finds wrong. "ha, Sire Blayse," quod *Mer*lyne tho,
"and j a*ȝ*ens goddis wille ony thing do,
Loke that þou telle it me anon,
and j wele beleven jt thusson. 1612
but gete the bothe penne, jnke, and p*ar*chemyn,
this book to be-gynnen and Bryngen to fyn,
and j schal the tellen EVery del
how that this book þou schalt wryten ful wel." 1616

Blasy gets his writing materials, Thanne Blayse anon, so god me save,
dide ordeynen alle thinges him Nedid to have;
and whanne that al thing REdy was,
and Merlin tells him thanne cam *Mer*lyn jnto that plas, 1620
and ano*n* be-gan him telle
of Christ, of cristes deth, how it befelle,
of Joseph of Arimathia, also of Josepe of armathye,
how of hym it happede, trewelye, 1624
and of Aleyn, and of Perown also,
& of his compenye, how they departid tho.
and thus ENdyd he of josepe there
& of al his Feleschepe also jn fere, 1628
and gan to tellen hym furthere MOre
and of the consultation of the devils. of þe parlement of þe develis thore,
and how thei conseylled hem be-twen
that a child jn the ERthe jbore schold ben 1632
that here wyt scholde haue & EK MEmorye,

1598. *man* corrected from *many*.
1603. *þe* squeezed in afterwards.
1631. *thei*, *i* squeezed in afterwards.

the peple to deceyven ful falslye.
" and be my Modir thou hast herd telle
how hire deceyveden the fendis so felle,
but be here owne fals folye
They han Me lost, As J the seye."

The history of Merlin's mother did Blasy know already.

[leaf 95 *a*]

al this werk thus Began Merlyne,
and Blasye it Browhte to ful good fyne;
and Evere the lengere that Blasye gan wryte,
the bettere hym thowhte he cowde Endyte;
and euere the More this Mater gan he drawe,
Evere the bettere he lykede Merlynes Sawe.
thanne Merlyn to Blayse cam anon,
& þere to hym he seide thus son:
" Blasye, thou shalt Suffren gret peyne
This storye to an Ende to bringen, certeyne,
and ȝit schal j Suffren Mochel More."
" how so, Merlyn?" quod Blasye thore.
" j schal be sowht," quod Merlyne tho,
" Owt from the west, with Messengeris Mo;
and they that scholen comen to seken Me,
they han maad Sewrawnce, j telle the,
Me forto slen for ony thing;
this sewrawnce han they Mad to here kyng.
but whanne they me sen & with me speke,
Non power they schole han on me to ben awreke;
For with hem hens Moste j gon,
and thou jnto othir partyes schalt welson,
To hem that han the holy vessel
which that js J-cleped the seynt Graal.
and wete thow wel and Ek forsothe
that thow and Ek this storye bothe,
ful wel beherd now schal it be
and also Beloved Jn Many contre."
and hos that wil knowen jn certaygne
what kynges that weren jn grete Bretaygne,
Sethen that Cristendom thedyr was Browht,

The work at the book goes well.

Merlin predicts difficulties in its continuation,

seeing that he himself will have to go to a strange land,

and Blasy to the regions of the Holy Graal.

For the early history of Great Britain,

1637. *be* added above the line.
1662. *J cleped*, *J* corrected from *c*.

the reader is referred to Martin de Beure's "History of Brute."

They scholen hem fynde, hos so that it sowht,
jn the Story of Brwttes book;
there scholen ȝe it fynde, and ȝe welen look;
which that Martyn de Bewre traunslated here
From latyn jnto Romaunce jn his Manere.
but leve we now of Brwtes book,
and aftyr this storye now lete vs look.

Chap. II.

King Costantin of Britain [leaf 95 *b*]

Jn Bretaygne somtyme a kyng there was
That costantyn was clepid jn that plas,
Wheche that A gret Whyle Regnede there,
and was a Man of ful gret powere.

has three sons:

and thre sones hadde that same kyng,
whiche that weren but Bachelerys ȝyng.

Costantin,

the Eldest Sone costantyn hyghte;
the secund Awrely Ambros was clepyd Ryhte,

Pendragon, and Uter.

Owther Pendragon, whethyr ȝe wylen haue;
the thrydde hyhte Vter, so god me Save!

His greatest vassal is Fortager.

this costantyn hadde a Man jn his lond
That hyghte Fortager, as j vndirstond;
This Fortager was holden a ful wis Man.
and happede costantyn an old Man was than,

When the king dies,

So that be Nature of kynde he deyde.
thanne the cownseyl amonges hem Seyde,
and axeden ho scholde ben here kyng.
Anon thus becomen they jn Emparlyng.
thussone thanne acordid they Everychon

his eldest son, Costantin, becomes king,

the Eldest Sone to Maken kyng anon,
whiche that hyghte costantyn
(Fulsone of his Regne Made he his fyn);
for aȝens Resown hadde it be
ony oþer kyng to han Mad, sekerle.

with the good will of Fortager,

To this Emparlyng acordyd fortager
and also alle the Barowns that weren ther.
so that alle the cownseylle assented, Sykerle,
That this Fortager Styward schold be,

1670. *it* added above the line.
1681. *hadde* added above the line.
1686. *The* corrected from *Te*. 1690. *an*, *a* corrected from *o*.

bothe the kyng and the Rewm to governen alle,
what Maner of aventures so Myhte befalle.
And thus this Fortager, jn certeyn,
of al that Rem his wil he hadde, ful pleyn,
Sawf only Constans ocupied the crowne,
but More Governaunce ne hadde he, nethir vpe ne downe.
So that this Fortager, beloved & dred he was
Ouer al the Rewm, jn Every plas;
For bothen wys and witty he was holde,
but ouerprowd wax he Mani folde.
For jn that Rewm, jn non degre
Myhte non man so Moche don as dyde he.
So that hit happede vppon a day
that there aryvede a Navye *with* gret aray.
Thanne the kyng wente anon to Fortager,
and anon fulfaire hym preyde ther
his Lond to helpen forto defende
with oþer helpe he wolde aftyr sende.
"For we ben alle at ȝowre comandement,
bothen j & al this Rewm, verament."
"Syre," quod Fortager to the kyng,
"the peple of ȝoure hauen me jn hatyng;
therfore let hem helpen now ȝow here,
For j ne schal Entermeten jn non Manere,
Nethyr for non Man that doth me praye,
Ne for non thing that ony man kan saye."

and under his protection.

Fortager is both loved and dreaded.

One day, a hostile fleet lands.

King Costantin goes to Fortager for help,

but is refused.

Whanne that kyng costantyn herde this,
and Ek þe peple þat *with* him þere was, j-wis,
That of hym Socour scholde they han non,
homwardis aȝen they gonne to gon,
and ordeyned hem jn Eche degre
with here Enemyes to fyhten, ful sekyrle.
but of here Enemyes Scomfyted they were,
and anon to the flyht they weren put there,
and losten Manye of here Meyne,
Of wheche dethes was gret pyte,

The king returns home,

and is defeated by his enemies.

1719. *wente*, added above the line.
1737. *Scomfyted they*, *d t* damaged (hole in the paper).

[leaf 95 *c*] And seyden that thyke los Hem not scholde Han falle,
and Fortager hadde ben amongis hem alle.

The people grow dissatisfied with the king,

that so towardis the kyng they fillen jn hate,
and from hym witdrowen bothe Erly and late,
So that of Evel herte they seiden hem be-twene
that he non lengere here kyng Schold beene.
Thanne to this Fortager comen they anon,

and ask Fortager to be king instead.

and þere to him they seiden thus son:
"Sire, with-owten kyng we be,
and that is nowht worth, Sire, parde;
So that for goddis love be thou kyng
aȝens owre Enemyes jn defendyng.
For we knowen non Man jn al this lond
That so wel vs scholde governe, as j vndirstond."

Fortager says he will not, as long as the king is alive.

thanne quod Fortager to hem ageyn:
"As longe as the kyng lyveth, jn certeyn,
Neuere non kyng ne schal j be,
Nethyr of non thyng to Entermeten Me."
thanne seiden they to him jn fere:
"jt is vs levere, the kyng ded were."
"ȝif he were ded," thanne quod he,
"and ȝe liked thanne kyng to maken Me,
thanne wolde j don My powere
ȝow to defende bothe fer & Nere."

They understand his meaning,

whanne they vndirstodyn his Meneng,
anon from hym they Maden departyng,
and tolden here frendis of his answere,
how that Fortager to hem seide there.

and decide to murder the king.

"thanne is it bettere that we þe kyng sle,
and thanne May fortager oure kyng be,
and that be vs kyng he is Mad,"
thus ech of hem to othir seid.
and so wile he thanne fulfillen hire wille—
"and to owre cownseyl consentyn vntylle."

Twelve men are chosen for the purpose.

thanne chosen they anon amonges hem alle
be whom this aventure Myhte befalle,
So that amonges hem weren there twelfe
that this aventure token on hem-selve.

1741. *not* added above the line. 1759. MS. *hem.*
1760. *vs*, *v* corrected from *l*.

So forth this xij wenten anon,
and jnto þe kynges halle comen thus son,
and so there with here swerdis so kene
at his Mete here kyng dyden they slene
(and ȝit was there non Man jn the halle tho
That ony word hem dorst speken vnto),
and wenten anon to Fortager,
& tolden hym how they hadden don ther.
thanne Semblawnt of wraththe Fortager gan Make
(but oþerwyse jn his herte he gan it Take),
and thus to hem he seyde tho:
"Evel han ȝe don ȝoure kyng to Slo!
and the Beste Men j wende ȝe hadde been
that jn al this Rewm a man Scholde seen;
& þerfore Riht sore it forthinketh Me
that ony swich thing be ȝow scholde be."
but algates thus was the kyng ded
be thike xij false Mennes Reed.
thanne gonnen they to spekyn hem be-twene
how that Fortager here kyng scholde bene.
At wheche cownceyl weren two goode Men,
that þe tothere tweyne bretheren kepten than,
bothen Awriele and Ek vter,
the kynges bretheren that last was ther.

The conspirers slay the king in his hall.

When they tell Fortager of their deed, he pretends to be angry,

and rebukes them.

However, the people speak of Fortager as the successor to the throne.

At the meeting there are two men present who have the care of Pendragon and Uter.

Whanne these tweyne goode Men vndirstood this,
that Fortager scholde ben kyng, j-wys,
Thanne knewen they that Mater ful Wel,
that be hym this thyng was don Echedel.
Anon token they cownceyl betwixen hem two
what with theke chyldren Myhten they do.
"Sethen that Fortager oure lord hath do slayn,
So wele he these two children, jn certayn.
For anon as that he kyng Js,
Ful Mochel sorwen he wyle werkyn, j-wis.
and we loveden here Fadyr ful wel,
For be hym oure goodes we hadden Moche del;

They understand Fortager's underhand [leaf 95 *d*] dealings,

and the danger which threatens their wards.

Out of gratitude to the father,

1784. *hem*, *e* through correction.
1800. *tweyne*, *we* damaged (cf. footnote to l. 1737).
1810. *he* added above the line.

and therfore worthy j-blamed weren we
deseysse to sen be hem Jn ony degre." 1816

they resolve to flee with the children

thanne thus token they here cownseyl,
that they thennes wolde flen saun3 fayl,
and that the children scholde with hem go,
lest that Fortager hem wolde don slo. 1820
"So þat therfore, Siker, avised we be
Forto Fleen jnto a straunge contre,

to Wales.

and towardes wales welen we go,
and ek the children with vs bothe two." 1824
So that they wenten forth here weye,
thike worthy goode men bothe tweye;

The princes grow up in Bourges.

So that jn a cyte dweldyn they thanne
that Boorges was clepid of many a manne; 1828
and there longe j-norsched weren they bothe,
with these goode men, j sey 3ow forsothe.

After Fortager's coronation,

Now thanne scheweth this Storye
how that Fortager kyng was, Sekerlye. 1832
and whanne that Sacrid he was kyng,

the murderers appear before him again.

thanne to hym these Barowns weren comeng,
the same that Slowen kyng costantyn
(therfore hadden they ful evele fyn), 1836
and stoden tofor Fortager vppon a rowe,

He at first pretends not to know them,

& countenaunce he made as he cowde not hem knowe,
& lyk as to-Fore he ne hadde neuere hem seyn;
this cowntenaunce made Fortager, jn certeyn. 1840

then, when they urge the service they have rendered him,

thanne they to hym aproched Neer,
and thus they seide to kyng fortager:
"by vs a kyng J-mad thow were,
& kyng costance we slowen for the here." 1844
and whanne kyng Fortager herde this,

has them arrested,

Anon he leet hem to be taken, j-wis.

[leaf 96 *a*]

sentences them to death,

"For ded moste 3e Nedys been,
For 3owre owne juggement hauen 3e 3oven clen, 1848
That seyn 3e slowen 3owre owne lord,
3e mosten be ded be 3owre owne word.
j se wel, the same wele 3e don be me,
but j schal 3ow bettere don kepen, Sykerle." 1852

1850. *3e*, MS. *3o*.

and whanne the xij Barowns herde this,
Ful sore they weren abasched, j-wys.
So that thanne Fortager Ryht anon
let hem don drawen Everichon,
and to hors hem bond, & so to-drowe,
and thus these xij knyhtes he slowe;
For of hem non pece with othyr lefte,
So that from the Bodyes Jt was Refte.

and causes them to be drawn asunder by horses.

thanne these Men that distroyed were,
Moche worthy kynrede hadden they there.
and to Fortager comen they anon,
and seiden: "Mochęl schaine hast þou vs don,
that thou oure kynrede hast thus slayn
and so veleynowsly to deth hem put, certayn.
For neuere Servise we scholen the do,
for þou oure kynrede thus dydest Slo."
whanne Fortager herde they gonnen hym Manace,
anon angry was he jn that place,
and seide, ȝif they Spoken ony More,
the same jewys scholden they han thore.
of wheche wordis they hadden gret dyspyt,
as who that ful lytel dowteden jt,
and seiden to Fortager there anon:
"thow dost vs Manacen Everichon,
but we don the to vndirstonde:
As longe as we han Frendis oþer Londe,
Gold other Sylver, owther oþer Entaylle,
the schal nethyr faillen werre ne bataylle.
and we defyen the what thou kanst do,
For falsly the kyngdom ocupiest thou so,
and Falsly & vntrewely ocupyest the crowne,
with-owten Ryht Skele owther Resowne.
for wete thow wel, Ryht jn good feye,
as Evel deth ȝit schalt thou deye."

Their relatives expostulate,

and menace the king.

He angrily threatens them with the same fate.

They defy him,

vow vengeance,

rail at his treachery,

and predict for him an evil end.

So that thus, jn this Manere degre,
betwixen the kyng & þe barowns began þe Melle;
and gret peple asembled vppon a day,
and on Fortager they comen, the sothe to say,

Thus a feud arises;

1871. MS. *seiden.*
1876. *Manacen, na* on erasure, the *a* corrected from *e*.

the king sustains heavy losses,

& gret distrocciown diden him there,
and of his token they many presonere.
So that jn this wyse kyng Fortagere
that Lond governede longe there,

but gets the upper hand.

and hem drof owt of the lond
as For a whyle, as j vndirstond.

Whanne owt of þe lond they were drevyn echon,

On account of his cruelty, also his own people rise against him.

Ful spetous to his peple he be-cam anon,
that amonges hem Suffren it myht they not longe,
but aȝens hym to rysen gonnen they fonge,
and benomen hym gret partye of his lond,
and *with* strenkthes on hym comen, j vndirstond.
whanne that Fortager vndirstood this,
Ful sorweful was he thanne j-wys,
and wende his Lond to hauen forgon.

He then offers reconciliation,

thanne abowten messageris sente he ful son
to alle his Frendis Jn eche contre,
that al abowtes jn his rewm pes forto be.

which is gladly accepted.

and whanne they vndirstooden that pes wolde he,
Ful glad weren they alle, ful sekerle.

[leaf 96 *b*]

Thanne cam Augwys to Fortager,

During these struggles, he has had the help of a heathen man, Augwis, who now gives him his daughter in marriage. The people strongly object to this.

and hym Servede ful longe ther,
tyl that al his stryf were j-don.
thanne Augwis and Fortager to-gederis spoken son,
and his owne dowhter he ȝaf hym to wyve,
wherfore his peple wraththed as blyve,
for þat he lefte a part of his creaunce,
benchesown of his wyf, *with*-owte variaunce,
and for that cristened not sche was,
his meynes love lost he jn that plas;
and that wyste wel kyng Fortager.

As danger threatens also from the two exiled princes,

and also of costantynes sones he dredde ther,
whiche that weren jn strawnge contre,
hym wolde owt-seken, ful Sykyrle,
Ful wel he wyste, not for his prow,
as Sykerly as that j telle it ȝow.
thanne thowhte he forto do maken anon

1902. *hym*, *y* corrected from *e*.

a ful strong towr of lym and ston;
that forto Maken, he dyde it spede,
that he of non Men scholde haue non drede.
thanne sente he abowtes jnto Eche contre
For Masowns and carponteris, ful sekerle,
and hem comanded jn alle Manere
a passyng strong towr to Maken there,
also strong as they cowden ony devyse,
that it were Mad after here Gyse,
and anon let ordeynen ston & Morter
this forsaid towr to be-gynnen ther.
and whanne this werk was thus begonne,
& the heythe of fowre Roddis vpe was j-Ronne
aboven the Erthe be here werkyng,
but aftyrwardis fil there a wondyr thing:
al that they wrowhten be the day,
be Nyht it was ouerthrowen, jn fay,
and be qwakyng of theke Mowntayn,
there as they wrowhten, jn certayn.
whanne that Fortager beheld al this,
that his werk ne wolde not lasten, j-wis,
thanne was he bothe jn sorwe and care,
til þat he knew why it so gan fare.
thanne sent he abowtes jn al the lond
aftyr alle the wysest, as j vndirstond.
and whanne they weren asemblyd Everychon,
To hem he Schewede this Merveille anon.
and thanne answerid they anon:
"Sykerly, Syre, this connen we not don!
Ful worthi clerkis they Mosten be,
for here-vppon they connen bet than we."
thanne seide Fortager to hem ful snelle:
"j trowe the sothe that ȝe me telle."
Anon Messengeris gonnen gon welfaste
aftyr þe wisest clerkis anon jn haste
that myhte ben fownde jn al his lond,
as j do ȝow to vndirstond,
and tolde hem of that wondyr thing,

Fortager resolves to build a strong tower, where he can be safe.

Workmen are sent for,

building materials are brought,

and the work is begun.

But what is built in the day, topples down in the night.

Fortager, greatly troubled,

sends for the wisest men in the country.

These advise him to call in the aid of men of learning.

So he does,

states the case before them,

1961. *welfaſte*, *l* corrected from *f*.

of his towr and of the Fallyng.
thanne of the wisest clerk*es* took he anon,
and jnto cownseyl gonne they gon,
and asks their opinion. & axede hem, ȝif they knewe*n* ony Resown,
why that his werk fyl so a-down.
"For, sekerly, it is j-told To Me
that but be ȝow wyst it may not be."
They reply that only [leaf 96 *c*] astrologers can clear up the matter. thanne answerid they hym jn here Manere
That of sweche Craft knew they not there.
"but So*mm*e clerkys here amongis vs ben
that of Astronomye konne*n*, as j wen."
thanne quod fortager: "Enqweryth ȝe
whiche of ȝoure felesche[pe] that jt be."
It is at first found out that there are two astrologers amongst them, thanne Ech of hem axeden o*ther* there
whiche of that craft konneng were.
than*ne* of that compenye were*n* there tweyne
that of that craft cowden, certeyne,
as Mochel as ony men lyveng;
thus was jt Reported to the kyng.
eventually seven come forward. that so the clerk*es* Emparled Jn fere,
that atte laste of hem sevene there were,
These, when brought before the king, and they weren lad anon to-fore the kyng
Forto tellen hym the aventure of this thing.
thanne axede hem the kyng anon
ȝif owht of that craft cowde they don,
and why that his Towr ne Myhte not stonde,
hym forto telle that, myhte*n* [they] fonde.
boldly undertake to settle the question, and they seiden that they cowden wel
of that cas tellen hym Every del.
and are promised great rewards. thanne swoor the kyng, so god hym save,
they scholde han what good that they wolde have.
thanne departyd this cownseille anon
of these clerkis there Everychon.
They remain, and thek* same sevene beleften there stylle
The kynges Talent there to fulfille,
Forto schewen there here konneng,
alle the cause of the Towris fallyng.

1969. MS. *axedē*. 1978. MS. *felefche*; cf. ll. 1628, 2440.
1992. MS. *hym forto that myhtē fonde* with *telle* added above the line. 1994. MS. *hem*.

These clerkis gonnen to stodyen welsore, set to work,
and Ech of hem there provede his lore;
So that the More they stodyed, þe forthere they were. and get on fairly,
thanne cam the kyng and axede hem there,
how that j-scholde stondyn of his thyng.
And as ȝit thanne cowden they tellen him non tydyng, but do not arrive at a definite conclusion.
but axeden hym viij dayes of Respyt. They then obtain a respite of eight days.
thanne quod the kyng: "wel me lykyth Jt,
but loke that ȝe otterly be that day
of My towr the sothe that ȝe me say."
Thanne wenten they to here cownseil ageyn, After fresh endeavours,
and Eche of hem gan to oþer seyn:
"what scholen wee werkyn jn this thing
hit Forto Bryngen to a good Endyng?"
thanne bespak on of the Sevene there:
"let Eche be hym-Selve his wyt schewen here, each working by himself,
how that jt Semeth hym of this cas,
let hym here Schewen jt jn this plas."
and Eche there schewede his verdit sone,
So that alle they acordid jnto one, they all agree that they have not found out the cause of the falling of the tower, but that they, instead, have seen in the stars another wonder:
Sawf that of the towr knew they non thyng
what was the cause of the Fallyng.
But on gret Merveille there they sye,
where-offen alle, ful trewelye,
Ful sore abasched alle they were,
For that Merveille that they syen there,
that a child jn this Erthe j-boren was a fatherless child has been born on earth.
whiche Erthly Fadir hadde neuere jn non plas.
thanne eche of hem to othir gan say:
"Let vs ben avised be the Morwe of þe day."

Thanne vppon the Morwe they sembled Eft sone,
and jnto on thing they acordid Echone:
So that of this child that there was bore,
how that his lyf Scholde be forlore, To have this child killed, and its blood put into the foundation of the tower— [leaf 96 *d*]
And his blood j-leyd jn the fundement
Of that jlke towr, verament,
ȝif that towr scholde Evere abyde.

2014. *gan*, *G* through correction. 2025. *sye*, *y* corrected from *e*.
2030. *whiche*, *e* stuck on to the preceding *h*.

thus they seyden that jlke tyde,
Everich a mayster be hym-self alone,
that is what they resolve to advise the king, and thus alle acordid they jn-to one.
"and lete vs Maken the kyng thus beleve,
in order to hide their ignorance oþer ellis of oure lyves he wyle vs depreve;
and save their own lives. and that theke child he do seken anon,
also faste as Messengeris Mown gon."
thanne thus Endid they here cownseil there,
that anon so to-forn þe kyng j-browht they were,
and Eche be hym-self tolde his avis
aforn the kyng there and alle his.
The king and his council deem the remedy acceptable. thanne, whanne the kyng and alle his cownsaylle
herden hem thus tellen, with-owten faylle,
and seiden alle: "it Myhte wel be,
Swich a thing, Jn alle degre,
3if so it be that a man be bore
with-owten Erthly fadyr, as 3e seiden before;
and thus han 3e me told Everyechone,
Ech of 3ow Maistres be 3owre one."
After the astrologers have repeated their assertion, "and but 3e it Fynde as we 3ow say,
Ellis doth be vs what 3ow lyst, jnfay!"
thanne seyde the kyng to hem ageyn,
he wolde hem jn warde putten, certeyn,
Tyl that the sothe he Myhte knowe.
thanne seiden they to hym vppon a rowe:
and given instructions as to the bringing of the child's blood, "Anon as that he Fownden Js, þat child so 3yng,
Loketh that 3e don hym Slen for ony thyng,
and that the blood be to 3ow browht,
and for non thyng they leven jt nowht."
they are locked up in a tower, pending the issue. the kyng hem putte alle sevene anon
Jn a ful strong hows of lym and ston,
and deliuered hem jn what hem Nede was,
therby to ben Sosteyned jn that plas.
Twelve messengers are sent out in search of Merlin; Thanne ordeyned the kyng Messengeris ful snelle,
xij worthy gentyles, as j 3ow telle,
that they scholden alle anon forth gon
this Fadirles child to seken welson.
they must swear and these xij Men the kyng Made swere,

2051. *cownfaylle*, *a* corrected from *e*.

that where so Evere j-fownden he were,
that they scholden hym Slen anon—
"and that his Blood jn a sawf place ȝe don,
and that it Sawfly be browht to Me,
thowgh two ȝer owte that ȝe be.
and loke that ȝe fynden hym for ony thing,
thowgh that ȝe maken the lengere taryeng."
and thus the Messengeris, forth they gon,
be tweyne & tweyne here weye token they son,
and sowhten jn Manye dyvers contre
that child to fynde, ȝif hit myhte be.
So that atte laste fowre Metten jn fere,
as that here aventure behappede there.

to kill him wherever they find him.

They search, two and two together, in divers countries.

Two of these pairs accidentally fall in with each other,

Thus Ryden these fowre Jn compenye,
tyl vppon a day jt happede, ful trewelye,
Thorwh a fayr Medewe as they gonne Ryde,
weren Many children pleyeng jn that tyde.
and Merlyne, that knew alle thencheson
of tho Messengeris comeng so son,
and wiste ful wel that they him sowghte,
anon to a Riche Mannes sone he Rawhte.
For he wiste ful wel that he wolde wroth be,
ȝif that he hym smete, fulle Sykerle;
Thanne lefte He vpe His staf Anon
and overthwert the Schenys smot him thus son.
Anon this child be-gan to crye
with a lowd voys ful angerlye,
and there Reprovyd this Merlyne,
and clepid him "fowle false fowndelyne,
that Nevere Fadyr haddest thow here,
thou fowle fowndelyng, thou fals bismere."
and whanne þe messengeris herden of this,
Towardis that child they drowen, j-wys,
and hym axede jn here Manere
what he was that hym so smot þere.
thanne answerid the child anon ageyn:
"Jt is a wommans sone here, jn certeyn,
that wot neuere ho that the Fadyr was,
Nethir ho that him begat, jn non plas."

and one day ride together through a meadow,

where some children are at play. Merlin is one of them. Knowing the errand of the messengers, he on purpose strikes a playfellow:

[leaf 97 *a*]

the latter begins to cry,

and calls him a nasty foundling.

The messengers' attention is roused, they question the struck child,

and Merlin himself steps forward and tells them that he is the one they seek.

whanne Merlyne herde that he seide so,
Towardis hem faste he gan to go,
and spak to hem with a lawheng chere:
"j am he whom that ȝe seken here,
And also hos deth that ȝe han swore;
lo, here j stonde now ȝow before!
For that my blood with ȝow scholde ȝe bere
To kyng Fortager jn alle Manere."

The messengers are surprised,

and whanne that the messengeris herden hym seyn so,
anon thanne alle abasched weren they tho,
and so tolden hym it was, ful certeynle.
"ȝe, that wiste j ful wel longe Er ȝe."

and say he must go with them.

thanne seide the Messengeris to hym ageyn:
"with vs Mostest thou gon, Jn certeyn."

He replies that he will gladly do so, if they promise not to kill him.

"that ful gladliche wyl j now do,
ȝif it so be that ȝe not me Slo."
but ȝit Merlyn wiste Ful wel
þat þerto talent hadden they Neuere a del.
but Merlyne Seyde this be Enchesown
To wyten what they wolden seyn anon,
and seide to hem: "ȝif that ȝe wilen grawnten me
that ȝe welen neither me distroyen ne sle,

He will also tell why the tower cannot stand.

with ȝow wile j gon forto Fonde
and telle why that þe towr ne may not stonde."
& whanne they herden the child tho speken this,

Still more surprised, they agree rather to be forsworn than slay such a child.

thanne mochel more abasched weren they, j-wys,
and seiden that—"this child wondris doth speke;
Jt were pyte on hym to ben awreke."
So that Eche to othyr gan forto seyn:
"Rathere forsworn scholen we ben, jn certeyn,
thanne jn ony wyse hym Scholde we Sle,
Sekyrly, for vs Jt Schal not now be."

Merlin invites them to stay at his mother's and Holy Blasy's place.

"Sires," quod Merlyne, "with me scholen ȝe go,
and ȝowre herberwe j schal bryngen ȝow vnto,
and loggen jn place there as my Modyr js,
& also anothir good Man, with-owten Mys;
For with-owten here leve j ne may not go,
Certein, Sires, J sey ȝow vnto."

2150. *ȝowr'*, *r'* squeezed in afterwards.

Thanne answeryd these Messengeris ageyn : They accept the invitation,
"With the to gon we ben ful fayn
jnto what place thow wylt vs lede ;
with the scholen we go *with*-owten drede."
So wenten they with *Mer*lyn jnto that plas,
jnto a no*n*nerye, there his Modyr was,
and *Mer*lyne chargede that Meyne Echon and Merlin provides good cheer.
Ful good chere the Messengeris to don.

Anon as that of here hors they were*n* lyht adown,
To-forn Blasye he dyde hem come*n* anon. In front of Blasy, he gives a full account
"Lo, Sire," quod Merlyne to Blasye tho,
"behold here tho Men that me seken to slo.
And j ȝow preye, sires, now alle jn fere
That trewe Witnesse ȝe Welen beren me Here [leaf 97 *b*]
To-forn this goodman that here Js,
ȝif that j lye owther sey owht amys.
haue j not Told ȝow the cause why of the facts:
that ȝe me come*n* to seken, verrayly?"
and they seiden : "ȝis, ful Sykerle!"
of wheche they wondrid how it myhte be.
thanne seide *Mer*lyn to Blayse there :
"now vndirstondith what j schal sein here."
To the Messengeris thanne seide he tho :
"Kyng Fortager now come*n* ȝe fro, king Fortager's tower,
whiche kyng, a gret towr doth he Make
onliche for strengthe for his owne sake,
the wheche towr ne May not stonde its falling,
For non werkyng of Ma*n*nes honde,
but that jn an owr down doth it go,
as mochel as they Maken jn a Mou*n*the o*þer* two.
wherfore that the kyng, ful wroth he js,
and aftyr his clergyse hath sent, J-wys, the consultation of the astrologers,
but of this non Resown conne they telle,
of that towr, why that it Felle ;
Ne non othir thyng ne cowde*n* they se,
but that a child born scholde there be
that hadde non Erthly fadyr here.
and vppon this they acordid jn fere, their advice,
that swich a child they scholden sle,
and the blood to-forn hym j-browht to be,

to leyn that blood jn the fundement,
thanne scholde the towr stondyn, veramẽt.
and whanne that þe kyng herde of this,
the king's surprise, thanne merveillede he mochel here-offen, j-wys.
and so the clerkis comanded him anon
that nedis this thing scholde be don.
and anon as they me Fownde,
they scholden slen me that jlke stownde,
and my blood forth with hem bere
to kyng Fortager, tyl they comen there,
and don tempre my blood with that mortere;
thanne seiden [they] the towr scholde stondyn there.
the sending of the twelve sworn messengers, Anon kyng fortager thorwh here Red
Sente xij messengeris jn-to every sted,
of wheche xij these fowre now be
that hider ben comen forto seken me.
but ferst alle xij he mad hem to swere,
vppon here Sewraunce, to-forn him there,
that be ony weye they scholden me sle
the ferste tyme they myhten me Se.
the meeting in the meadow, and as thorwgh the medewe they gonne Ryde
where as manye children pleyden that tyde,
j knew ful wel here cause anon,
and the incident with the playmate. and to þe beste of hem alle j gan to to gon,
and him there smot j wondyr sore,
For that j wyste ful wel before
that the werste he wolde sein be me
that he cowde onne thinken jn ony degre.
and that dede j for non othyr thing,
but for these men of me scholden hauen knoweng.
Now, maister Blayse," quod merlyne, "j preye the,
So axe now of hem ȝif this trewe be."
The messengers confirm his words, "Now certes, maister," quod the messengeris, "j-wis,
Ryht as he seith, forsothe now it Js.
as god vs brynge jnto owre contre,
Jt is ful trewe that he telleth the."
Blasy praises his wisdom, "Now certes," quod this maister thanne,
"& he mot lyve, he wil ben a wys manne,

2206. MS. *ſeiden the.* 2208. MS. *Sentē; to* added above the line.

and therfore pite it were hym to qwelle
Forsothe, Lordynges, as J 3ow telle."
thanne quod these MESSENGERIS : " certeinle,
For vs, be owre Sewraunce, schal he nevere ded be,
For we hadden MOCHE more levere that owre kyng
dysherite vs of al owre worldly thyng.
For ful wel knoweth he that wot al this,
that talent therto haven we non, j-wis."

and the messengers [leaf 97 *c*] renew their promise not to kill him.

Thanne this Blayse clepid MERlyne anon
hym for to axen of a prevy qwestion,
and axede of MERlyne ful prêvyle
3if they hadden ony wyl hym for to sle.
and MERlyn gan to Lawhen & seide : " Nay,
Ful wel here wylle j knowe, jn fay,
for 3e scholen comen and 3oure-self here
of here Sewraunce Jn alle MANERE."
Now quod MERlyne : " J schal with 3ow go,
3if that 3e welen ENSWREN me vnto
that 3e scholen me bryngen to-fore þe kyng
with-owten ony harm oþer bodyly hyndryng,
and that non harm be don to ME,
tyl that j haue hym bothe spoken & se."
So that to hym MADEN they here Surawnce
him there to bryngen with-owten Nosawnce.

Blasy, still uneasy on this point,

is reassured by Merlin,

who lets him hear, once more, the asseveration of the messengers.

" Now Se j," quod Blayse to hym anone,
" That thou wilt me beleven here alone.
Now telle thou me thanne what j schal do
of this Book that j have be-gonnen so."
" that schal j the telle," quod MERlyne anon,
" ER that j from the owt this place wil gon.
vndirstondist thou not wel this,
that GOD to me hath sent, j-wys,
bothe wyt, MYNDE, and MEMORYE
alle manere of thinges to discrye,
MORE thanne to ony ERTHLICHE MAN ?
this thow supposyst that J kan.
So that they that me supposid to have,

Blasy, seeing that Merlin is to leave him, asks what to do with the book begun.

Merlin replies :

" God has endowed me with special powers,

2238. *dysherite*, *s* inserted afterwards.
2266. The line was omitted and then written up the margin.

han me forlost, and god wyl me save,
and me hath chosen to his Servise,
Swich forto don as j kan devyse,
that non Man neþer kan don but J,
J seye ȝow, Maister, ful trewely.
and therefore me behoueth to go
thedyr as these Men comen fro
jnto this contre to seken me here;
with hem wyle j forth gon jn fere.
and there schal J so moche thing seyn,
that þe peple jn me schal beleven, pleyn,
and holden me for the wisest Man one
that on Erthe Js except god alone.
and thider schalt þou come and þere fulfylle
The werk that j to þe spak of vntylle.
but with me thedyr schalt thou not gone,
but aftyr thedir schal thow comen alone,
and axen jnto Northhumberland,
þe whiche is a wilde contre, þou vndirstand.
and þere schalt þow knowelichyng haue
þere forto dwellen and þere to be save.
and thider schal j comen to the
and the Schewen Many diuers secre,
& also bryngen to the alle Maner of thyng
That behoueth to thy werkyng.
and ful wel alowed schalt thou be
For thy Travaille, ful Sykerle:
jn this world, joye to thy lyf,
and aftir, Endles blisse with-owten stryf.
and as longe as jn this world here
that ony Man lyveth jn goddis Manere,
that werk Evere beloved schal be
and be herd of the peple ful hertyle.
and weteth wel that my gret travaylle
begynneth not ȝit, with-owten Faylle,
Ne not ne schal jn non wyse,
Tyl that come the fowrthe kyng, a Man of pryse.
and jn his tyme myn travaylle Schal be,

and chosen me for His service.

Therefore I must go with these men to their country and disclose great things.

Thou shalt come thither later on;

but now thou shalt go to Northumberland.

There I will visit thee and help thee on with thy work.

Thy reward shall be great,

and thy book shall be ever loved.

As for my own great labour, it will begin only in the time of the fourth [leaf 97*d*] king,

2286. *thow*, corrected from *they*.

also the aventures of gret Breteygne, sykirle;
hos Name schal ben kyng Arthowr,
a ful worthy kyng and of gret hono*ur*.
thanne schalt thou comen jnto that contre
of whiche that ferst [j] told of the.
and thedyr to the schal J fonge
Ful often-tymes, Evere amonge,
the forto Maken to vndyrstonde
alle thynges that ben don jn breteygne londe,
and Ek that after scholen befalle,
Jn thy book to putten hem alle.
For wete thow wel, Jn certeyn,
Mochel more schal it be herd, & more pleyn.
For there ne schal nothing jn this lond be,
Nethir litel ne Mochel, jn no*n* degre,
Nethir don ne wrowht jn non Manere,
That to thy book p*ro*fitable were,
anon jn thy Book it schal be do,
For knowen schal it be for Evere Mo.
and the Name of thy Bok schal be
J-clepyd seint Graal, ful Sykirle."
and thus Mer*l*yne to his Maister spak there,
and hym thus tolde jn dyvers Manere
what Mane*r* of thing that he scholde do,
Ere that he diparted his Maister fro.
and "Maister" he clepid him for this Manere,
For Maister to his Modir he was Everywhere.
whanne Blayse wi*th* Mer*l*yn thus hadde j-spoken,
Thanne was his herte jn joye be-loken,
and to Mer*l*yne he seide anon tho:
"what so thou comandest me to do,
and j Mowe it don jn ony degre,
J schal it don, ful sekerle."

Thanne anon Mer*l*yne tornede ageyn
To the Messengeres his weye, ful pleyn,
and seide that he wolde nedes go
his leve of his Modir to taken tho.

whose name shall be Arthur.

Then thou shalt come into the same country,

and I will tell all things about Britain.

both small and great,

for thee to put into thy book,

which shall be called St. Graal."

Thus Merlin takes leave of his master—

so he calls him for his mother's sake—

and Blasy is happy

and resigned.

After this, Merlin with the messengers

2312. MS. *ferſt told.* 2337. *he* added above the line.

goes to take leave of his mother.

Thanne ledde he these Messenger*is* forth anon,
and to his Modir gonne they gon.

He says that he himself must depart,

" Swete Modyr, j telle now the,
here ben comen men from fer contre
and of strange place to seken me here,
wherfore with hem moste j go jn alle Manere.
therfore j come my leve to take,
that non Morneng for me ȝe Make ;

In fulfilment of God's will,

and forto fulfille goddis Servyse
Thider Most j gon jn alle wyse.
For j ne may not his wyl fulfylle,
Tyl jnto that Lond j come vntylle,
whedir so Evere he wil me lede
there his wille forto spede.

and that Blaise, that is ȝoure Maister dere,
thedyr schal comen also jn fere ;
So that bothen vs tweyne moste ȝe forgon,
and for vs here behoveth ȝow to dwellen alon."

The mother commends him to God,

thanne seide to hym his Modir agein :
" sethen it May non oþer ben, jn certeyn,
j comande ȝow to God al-Myht,
For it is Nethyr jn My power ne Myht
ȝow with-holden aȝens ȝoure wille,
what that Evere j seye ȝow vntylle.

and only wishes Blasy could stay.

But siker, sone, and ȝoure willes be,
j wolde that Blayse schold leven with Me."
" Forsothe, Modir, he ne May not So,

[leaf 98 *a*]

For Nedylynges thedyr Moste He go."

Merlin and Blasy depart in different directions.

And thus Merlyne of his Modir took cownge,
and forth with the Messengeris wente, ful sikerle.
& Blayse wente forthe jnto Northhumberlond,
lyk as Merlyn dyde hym to vndirstond.

Merlin and the four messengers, on their road, overtake a churl who has bought a pair of strong shoes

Merlyne and these Messengeris Jn fere,
alle forth to-gederis Riden they there.
So that thorwgh a town gonnen they Ryde,
where as Market was the same tyde.
& whanne the town they were past Everychon,
a cherl to-For hem Syen they gon,
that him hadde j-bowht a peire stronge schon,

and ek strong clowt lethir to sette þere-on.
and whanne that Merlyne this cherl gan se,
he gan anon to lawghen ful prevyle.
thanne axeden hym the Messengeris there
why he lawghed, & wherfore it were.
"Sires, j lawghe," quod Merlyne thanne,
"at hym that ȝondir goth, ȝone cherlisch Manne,
that hym bowht ful stronge schon
and ek stronge clowtes to setten þer-on.
And j ȝow seye, ful certeynly,
that he schal dyen ful sodeynly,
Er that he come to his owne place;
Swich schal ben both his hape & his grace."
and whanne they herden hym, that he seide so,
Ful Mochel Merveyl hadden they tho.
thanne seiden they that fayn they wolde knowe
ȝif it scholde happen with-jnne a throwe.
and so that tweyne folweden that jlke veleyn,
and tweyne with Merlyne Ryden, certeyn.
they folwed not this cherl passyng a Myle,
that he ne was ded with-jnne a whyle,
and Evene a-Myddes the hye weye,
there gan this veleyn forto deye.
and his schon vndir his arm were,
and ek his clowt lethir also there.
Anon as they hadden seyn this syht,
To here felawes they wenten with al here Myht,
and tolden hem of that they hadden seyn,
and howh that þe veleyn to-forn hem gan deyen.
"Now certes," quod these Messengeris aȝen,
"alle theke clerkis, but Folys they been,
that wolde don vs this wyse Man to sle,
but for non thing jt ne schal not be.
For on myn owne Body levere hadde j here
To suffren gret peynes jn dyvers Manere,
thanne his body ony harm scholde haue,
also god me wysse other Save!"
and so they seiden Everychon,
alle that with hym gonne forto gon.
thanne thankid they hym al jnfere,

and leather to mend them with.

Merlin laughs quietly.

When asked for the reason,

he says the man will die before reaching his home.

Two of the men ride after the rustic,

and see him expire on the road.

They return to their comrades, and tell what they have seen.

These blame the astrologers, who have desired such a wise person's death;

they thank Merlin.

of that *mer*veille he told hem there. 2424

The messengers are amazed at Merlin knowing whatever they speak or do.

and sore a-basched weren they Echon,
For they cowden non thing nethir speken ne don,
but that he knew alle here Entent;
thus thanne seiden they, verament. 2428

Proceeding on their journey,

Forth thanne Riden they in here jorne,
Tyl that jn Fortageris lond they be,
and *with*-junen his strengthe and his powere,
alle the iiij Messengeris and *Mer*lyne jn fere. 2432
So that Jt happede vppon a day,

[leaf 98 *b*]

As thorwgh A town thanne lay here Way,

they see a child being carried to the grave.

A chyld to-ward Beryeng was there j-bore,
and Moche ful sore wepyng was there-fore. 2436
the prestes and clerkis, ful faste they songe,
as lowde as they myhten with here tonge.

Merlin laughs.

thanne gan this *Mer*lyn to lawghen anon,
as he with his Feleschepe gan forth to gon, 2440
and seide to his felawes: "Merveilles J se."
"Now, goode child," quod they, "what Mown tho be?"

He points to the man weeping behind the bier,

"Se ȝe not," quod Merlyn, "now here
this goode Man that Folweth the bere, 2444
that so sore wepeth and Maketh swich doel?"
"ȝis, sekyr," quod they, "we sen hym wel."

and to the priest singing in front.

"and se ȝe not the preest that goth to-fore,
That so Meryly now syngeth thore?" 2448
"ȝis, child, that don we, ful Sykirly."

The priest ought to weep, says Merlin, for the child is the priest's.

"ȝe, the Sorwe scholde he Maken, trewly,
For, be Myn hevyd, the child is his,
and *non* thyng his that folweth, j-wys; 2452
& therfore the Sorwe the preest scholde Make
that the goodman doth For the childis sake."
"what, trowe*n* ȝe [not] that the child his be?"
"Nay, Sires," quod Merlyne, "ful Sykirle." 2456
"Leve child, how Mowe*n* we the sothe knowe?"

He tells his companions how to ascertain the truth.

"Goth forth," quod *Mer*lyne, "on a rowe,
and axeth the Modyr the cause why
why that hire husbond wepeth so soryly. 2460
Ano*n* wele sche sein it is for his chyld,
that to hym was bothe Mek and Myld.

2455. MS. ȝe *that*.

and loke that ȝe answeren hire ageyn
that it was neuere his, Jn certeyn,
but that the prestes child it Js
That to-forn goth and syngeth, J-wys."

Forth thanne wente the Messengeris anon,
and to this wommman there gonnen they gon,
& token hire on syde Evene ryht there,
aposynge hire thus jn this Manere;
Every word, Ryht as Merlyne bad,
anon to this wommman there they sayd.
and whanne this wommman herde this,
Ful sore abasched sche was, j-wys,
and to hem seide Jn this Manere:
"Me thynketh, to ȝow may j not lyen here,
For trewly, as ȝe seyn now, it Js,
j May not the contrarye seyn, j-wys.
but lordynges, j preye ȝow for charite
that to My lord Ne discureth not Me,
For owther he wolde me slen anon,
owther owt of his compenye j scholde be don.'
and whanne they knewen that it was so,
aȝen to Merlyne gonnen they to go,
and thankyde hym of his Talkyng,
of whiche they hadden gret Merveyllyng.
and so jn here jorne gonnen they Ryde,
Towardis kyng Fortager þat same tyde.
and whanne they comen there the kyng was,
thanne seiden tweyne of hem jn that plas,
and spoken to Merlyne j[n] the plyht,
that to the kyng wolden they gon ful Ryht,
and tellen hym what they han fownde.
thanne preyden they Merlyne that jlke stownde
hem forto cownseillen, what they scholde say,
lest they weren blamed Jn ony way,
For be-cawse they hadden hym not slayn,
as they weren comawnded, jn certayn.
"For, be aventure, we scholen ben schent,
that we ne hadden þe slayn, verament."

The messengers go to the woman,

and say to her the same as Merlin has told them.

The woman confesses her guilt,

and implores their discretion.

The messengers thank Merlin.

On arriving home, two of the messengers are to give report to the king.

They ask Merlin's advice.

2491. MS. *j the.*

[leaf 98 c]

Merlin instructs the messengers

"Now, leve Sires," quod Merlyne thanne,
"and ȝe wil don as J schal ȝow kenne,
J-blamed scholen ȝe neuere be
Jn non manere wise, Sires, for me.
Anon to kyng Fortager faste scholen ȝe go,
and jn this wyse that ȝe seyne hym vnto:
lik as that ȝe haven me j-fownde,
and that j kan hym tellen with-jnne a stownde
why that his towr ne may not stonde;
and that wile j ful sone taken on honde,
on covenaunt the clerkis he wil Slen,
lik as they desireden J scholde haue ben.
For telleth hym that j knowe the cause why
wherfore they wolden me don slen, trewly.
and whanne ȝe haven told hym al this,
loketh his byddyng ȝe don with-owten mys."

what to relate to King Fortager,

and what to demand of him.

The messengers repair to the king,

thus departyd the Messengeris from hym, trewelye,
and to kyng Fortager anon comen they jn hye.
whanne that kyng Fortager gan hem beholde,
Ful joyeful he was Jn many Folde,
and axede of hem how they hadden sped
of thike arende that he on hem leyd.

and describe how they have found Merlin.

"Sire," quod these Messengeris, "so as we myhte,
we scholen ȝow it tellen anon Ryhte."
thanne took hem the kyng Jn cownseyl anon,
and they hym tolde there Ryht son
how that they hadden Merlyne j-fownde,
jn what manere, and with-jnne what stownde.
"and but ȝif it hadde ben his owne wille,
we cowde Nevere hauen comen hym vntylle."

The king asks who this Merlin is.

thanne seide the kyng to hem Ryht tho:
"what is thike merlyne þat ȝe speken of so?
j bad ȝow seken, ful plenerlye,
a Fadirles child, ful vtterlye,
that was neuere begeten of erthly man;
of this mater telleth me, as ȝe kan!
and þerto the blood of hym me brynge,
this was ȝoure charge, with-owten lesynge."

They say, he is that fatherless child,

"Sire, this same Merlyne Js he
of whom that ȝe speken, ful sykirle.

and therto the wisest man he is one
þat ever was born, except god alone. and the wisest of mortals,
and that oth that ȝe maden vs swere,
we han it fulfyld, as ȝe now here."
and ȝit the messengeris tolden him more,
that his clerkis cowden non skele thore
him forto tellen the cawse why
that his towr myhte not stonden, trewely.
" but anon apertly he wil ȝow telle able to tell why the tower falls,
why the cause ȝoure towr doth falle.
and þerfore he vs hyder to the sente
Forto knowen of ȝoure entente.
ȝif that ȝe wolden owht with hym speke,
thanne wolde he to ȝow his herte Breke;
and of othir merveilles he wyl ȝow say, and other marvels
what aftyr schal be-fallen many a day. besides.
and ȝif ȝe welen, we scholen hym Sle,
For tweyne felawes of owre with him be."
" Nay," quod the kyng, " and it be so, The king is highly
that he cowde syker tellen me vnto satisfied.
the cause of my towris Fallyng,
thanne wolde j that ȝe hym slowen for non thing.
and ȝif he conne me tellen, certeynle,
and that ȝe bryngen hym to me."

Thussone these messengeris gonne to gon, The messengers return to Merlin,
and the kyng aftyr hem prekede anon.
Anon Whanne merlyne Sawgh that messenger, [leaf 98 *d*]
to hem Spak he anon Ryht ther:
"ȝowre trowthe to me haven ȝe now plyht
me not to deren be day ne be nyht."
" thou seist ful trewe," quothen they anon, and tell him that he is
" For vs, certein, harm getyst thou non, safe.
For we hadden levere be aventure to deye
thanne the forto slen, certeinlye."
" J schal ȝow tellen," quod merlyne, " everydel,

2541. MS. *therto of the wifest Man*, the preposition being added above the line. Cf. Notes.
2544. *we han* corrected from *whan*, the *e* being added above the line.

how that 3oure trowthe 3e scholen save*n* Ryht wel." 2576

Merlin rides to meet the king.

Thus *with* Merlyne Ryden they forth Jn fere,
Tyl that with kyng Fortager Metten they there.
and anon as Evere Merlyne hym Say,
streyth to the kyng he took his way, 2580
and seide: "sire kyng, ful wel thou be!
A word jn cownseil wolde j speken *with* the."

takes him and the messengers aside,

Anon took he there the kyng on syde,
and ek clepede the Messengeres at *þat* tyde 2584
That hym forto seken j-charged were
the sothe of hym forto Enqwere.
"why that the Towr stonden ne Myhte,
j schal the tellen, Syre, ano*n* Ryhte, 2588

tells up the astrologers' malign advice,

and how *þat* thow comandedest me to sle
Be the cownseil of clerkys that false be,
and my blood al forto take
and *þer*-with thy Morteer for to Make. 2592
but 3it they Fayllen of here art,
for of that konne*n*ge haue*n* they no*n* part.

demands that the astrologers shall be punished,

but sire kyng, and *þou* wilt Enswre*n* me here
the same Jewyse to don jn alle Manere 2596
vppon hem as thou wost haue*n* don be Me,
J schal the tellen, ful sykerle,
the cause why *þat* thy towr doth falle,
so openly, that 3e scholen knowe*n* it alle, 2600

and undertakes, on that condition, to make the tower stand.

and declaren openly alle 3ow be-Fore
how *þat* it schal lasten for Euere More.
3if thou wylt don as j the say,
telle me now, sire kyng, owther 3e o*þer* Nay." 2604
thanne answered the kyng ageyn:
"3if *þou* do as that *þou* seist, jn certeyn,

The king complies.

the same jewise scholen they have
as *þou* scholdest han had, so god me save." 2608
"Go we, sire, thanne," quod Merlyne tho,
"thedir that thy towr *þou* begy*n*nest so,
and thike same clerkis brynge *with* the,
thanne there the sothe Mihtest *þou* se, 2612
3if they conne*n* owht seyn, amo*n*ges hem alle,

2608. *ſcholdeſt*; the first vowel is apparently an *a*.

whi that thy towr doth so down falle."
so wenten they forth alle jn fere,
and the clerkis sent aftyr were
to thike there as the towr was dyht;
thedyr comen they alle anon ryht.

They all go to the tower.

And whanne they weren assembled Everichon,
Merlyne hem thanne aposede anon,
and axede on of the wysest clerkes
why that so fyl adown the kynges werkes.
thanne answerede this clerk him ageyn:
"we ne connen not it tellen, jn certeyn,
but the kyng we tolden jn what degre
wherby his werk Sosteyned scholde be."
"ȝe," quod the kyng to the clerkis thanne,
"ȝe boden me don seken aftyr swich a manne
that Neuere Erthly Fadyr hadde,
and hym don Slen, thus ȝe me badde.
and Swich a man j Not where to fynde,
For me Wolde thenken Jt Were Al aȝens kynde."
and thanne bespak there Merlyne anon,
and seide to tho clerkis Everychon:
"Lordynges, a fool that ȝe wolden maken the kyng,
To don hym to seken so wondirful a thyng:
a man that Neuere Erthly Fadyr hadde,
jnto this world be born and forth bradde.
but ȝe non thyng ne dyden Jt for his prow,
but what the cause was, j schal tellen yt ȝow:
For wel ȝe wysten that ȝe scholden deye,
but ȝif that the trowthe ȝe tolden, jn feye.
and for that ȝe cowden non othirwyse do,
therefore ȝe boden hym Swich a man to slo,
and the Blood of hym al forto take,
the wheche his Towr stonden Scholde make.
and thus thowghten ȝe that man to don sle,
ȝoure-self to askapen, ȝif it myhte be."
and whanne they herden the chyld thus seyn,
Ful sore abasched weren they, certeyn,

There Merlin asks the astrologers if they can explain its falling.

They say: "No,

but we have told the king a remedy."

[leaf 99 *a*]

Merlin replies:

"You deluded the king,

for you feared his anger at your ignorance."

The astrologers are confounded.

2640. *yt* added above the line, *y* blurred.

and wisten wel thanne forsothe anon
that deyen scholden they Everychon.
Merlin continues: "behold, Sire kyng," quod Merlyne tho,
"Now sen here ȝe how this doth go,
the astrologers' object was not to make the tower stand, but to rid themselves of him. that these clerkys ne wilen not me don sle,
with My blood ȝowre towr j-Mad to be,
but that amonges hem loot is þere cast
that for me they Mosten deyen Jn hast.
and now axeth hem ȝif it be not so,
for sekyr, how so the game now go,
Non of hem js here so hardye
jn My precense to Maken ony lye.
"Seyth he soth?" quod the kyng anon.
The astrologers confess, "ȝe, Sykerly," quod the clerkys Everychon,
"But we connen not weten, jn Non degre,
how that al this thyng knowen scholde he.
and ask to be spared long enough to see the tower made to stand. Sire, we ȝow preyen as oure Soverein lord,
alle we ȝoure clerkes, be on acord,
that owre lyves ȝe wolden graunten vs here,
tyl that the Sothe we Myhten sen jn Fere,
how that he Scholde this towr don stonde
be ony werk of Mannes honde."
Their request is granted. "Now certes, lordynges," quod Merlyne anon,
"and tyl that ȝe sen the same thyng don,
and why that the towr doth so falle,
Erst Schal there non deyen of ȝow alle."
thanne thankede they Merlyne Everychon,
alle these clerkis be on and be on.
Merlin explains all about the tower: thanne quod Merlyne to kyng Fortager:
"wylt thou now knowen the sothe her
why that thy werk doth so down Falle,
j schal openly it tellen amonges ȝow alle.
Now herkene, Sire kyng, what j schal say:
under the ground is a great water, here vndir this Grownd, j dar wel lay,
There goth a water bothe sterne & gret,
and under the water two dragons, vndyr wheche water ben there ȝet
Tweyne wondirful Stowte dragowns,
þe Moste oryble that ben Jn ony Regiowns,
one white, the other red, of wheche on Js al whit, anothir is Red,
of the dragowns that ben Jn that sted.

Aboven wheche dragowns there ben, certeyn,
tweyne grete stones, that ben ful pleyn,
that over-whelmen bothe dragowns,
whiche that ben so wondirful of faciouns.
and whanne thei Felen the water Sore peyse
vppon hem bothe, & doth hem deseyse,
thanne tornen they hem bothe with gret Myht,
and Meveth al the Erthe Evene vpryht,
whiche Meveng that Maketh thy werk to falle;
this Scholen ȝe knowen bothe gret and smalle.
So that my borwes, aqwyt scholen they be,
And thy clerkis beheveded, ful trewle.
and therfore asaye ȝif that J soth seye,
owther be ony weys that J do lye.
For of this Mater thy clerkis knowen non thyng,
Ful Siker thou be, For alle here werkyng."
"Now certes," quod Fortager to Merlyne thanne,
"and this be soth, thou art a trewe Manne,
and therto the wysest that Evere was bore
of Erthlych Men that konnen of lore."
"Now, Merlyne," quod kyng Fortagere,
"of on thing that thow wost tellen me here:
how that this Erthe Myhte be don away;
J preye the, Merlyne, the Sothe Me Say."
"with cartes sone May jt be led henne,
& vppon the Bakkes of Many Menne."
thanne kyng Fortager let ordeynen anon
bothe cartes and werkmen Many on.
and Merlyne comaunded there jn haste
that the clerkys Scholden they kepen wel faste.
thus werkmen wrowhten bothe day & Nyht,
tyl that to this water they comen ful Ryht.
and whanne they hadden this water j-fownde,
anon they tolden it the kyng that stownde.
thanne gan the kyng thedyr to gon
with ful gret joye Ryht anon.
and Merlyne with hym thedyr he ladde,
For he wrowghte alle thyng as he hym badde.

with two large flat stones over them;

the dragons, annoyed by the pressure, turn, and make the earth quake.

[leaf 99 *b*]

Merlin exhorts the king to test the truth of his words.

On the king's question concerning the means of removing the earth,

Merlin recommends carts and carriers.

Labourers work day and night, till they find the water.

Then the king goes thither with Merlin.

2695. *thei*, *i* squeezed in afterwards.

and whanne thider j-come they weren Echon,
this Merveillous water they beheldeu thusson.
thanne to hym clepyd he his cownsaylle,
The king speaks admiringly of Merlin to his council. and seide: "lordinges, with-owten Faylle, 2732
this child is wondir wis with-alle,
that can thus tellen how it schal falle,
and of this water that here now Js;
jt Merveylleth Me ful Mochel, j-wys. 2736
and seith he that vndir this water so clere
ben tweyne dragowns dwellyng jn fere.
and ȝit wot j Neuere what j schal do,
tyl he som cownseyl ȝeve me therto." 2740
He then asks him about the removal of the water. thanne cleped he Merlyne to hym anon,
of þat water to weten what scholde be don.
quod Merlyne: "grete diches we scholen here Make,
wherthorwgh this water schal forth Schake, 2744
thorwh this Medewe here anon,
and thus this water schal forth gon."

Ditches are dug. Thus weren these diches sone there Mad,
as Merlyne it ordeynede, comaunded, and bad. 2748
and this water his cowrs there hadde,
and be this craft jnto othire contres ladde.
Merlin predicts that the dragons will fight, and that one will be killed. thanne cam Merlyne to kyng fortagere,
and thus anon tolde hym there 2752
that—"also sone as the dragouns to-gyderes fele,
be-twixen hem schal be-gynnen a sory Mele,
For they to-gederis ful sore scholen fyhte,
and the ton the tothyr Schal slen owt Ryhte. 2756
He wants all the barons to see the fight. and therfore Sende thou thy Messengeris anon
To alle thy Barowns now Everychon,
to sen this bataylle that schal ben here
of these dragowns that scholen fyhten jn fere; 2760
For the bataylle of hem and that chawnse
Nis not with-owten gret Signyfyawnse."
Messengers are sent out. thanne sente kyng Fortager forth anon
his Messengerys, as faste as they Myhten gon, 2764
to warnen bothe Barown, bacheler, & knyht,

2762. *Signyfyawnfe*, the first *y* through correction.

and alle othere that gon owther Ryden Myht.
and whanne they weren assembled Echon,
thanne seide kyng Fortager to hem anon, 2768 The assembled people are informed of Merlin's predictions,
and tolde hem of Manye a wondyr thyng
That scholde be-falle be Merlynes talkyng,
And How the two dragowns to-gederes scholen fyhte, [leaf 99 c]
and the ton the tothyr to slen anon Ryhte. 2772
thanne Ech to other seide, certeynle,
that this bataylle were ful good to se.
thanne axeden they of the kyng ful sone and wonder which of the
which of þe dragowns scholde on lyve gone. 2776 dragons is to survive.
than answered hem the kyng ageyn:
"that tolde he not Me ȝit, jn certeyn."
and whanne that this water owt was past, The water being drained,
thanne bothe tho stones Syen they jn hast, 2780 two stones appear to view.
whiche vppon the dragowns weren there
as that they lyen bothe Jn fere.
thanne axede Fortager of Merlyne anon The king asks how
how thyke stones a-wey Myhte ben don. 2784 these stones can be removed,
"ȝis, ȝis," quod Merlyne, "that Schal be do,
and non Man to harmen the worth of a slo.
For they scholen Meven Nevere a del,
Tyl that Ech other May Felen Ryht wel; 2788
and thanne to-gederis Scholen they fyhte,
Til the ton moste deyen be Ryhte."
thanne axede the kyng which of hem tweyne and which of the dragons
whiche ded that scholde ben, certeyne. 2792 is to die.
"Jn here Bataylle there schal be
Ful gret Signyfiaunce, J telle the,
and that ful gladly j wyle the Schewe
aforn thre of thy Barowns on a rowe." 2796
thanne clepede Fortager to hym anon Before three barons, who enjoy the king's particular confidence,
thre Barowns that he trostyd most vppon.
Anon seide Merlyne to hym thanne:
"Trostist thow wel on these thre Menne, 2800
and ben they trewe of thy cownsaille,
what so Evere it May avaylle?"
"ȝe, Sekerly, Merlyne," quod Fortager,
"Non trewere knowe j neþer fer ne Neer." 2804
"thanne May J," quod Merlyne, "tellen the

of swich thyng as thow tellest me.
Merlin tells that the red dragon shall be slain,
J wele that thow knowe here, jn certayn,
that the Rede be the white schal ben slayn.
but fyrst gret peyne Schal he have,
er from the Rede he may gon save.
and that his death is of great significance.
and the deth of the Rede dragown
Schal Notyse ful gret Significaciown,
and the victorye of the dragown so whyt.
For the it is ful hard to knowen Jt,
but tyl that the Bataylle be alle j-do,
of this thing schalt thou knowen no mo."
whanne this peple thidir comen echon,
One of the stones is removed, and the white dragon appears.
Ful hastely hadden they vpe the ston.
thanne Syen they this whyte dragown,
that was wondyr oryble of Facyown.
and whanne this peple this dragown there say,
they weren sore abaschet, alle with-owten nay.
and whanne that thus they hadden J-do,
Then they go to the other stone, and find the red dragon, more horrible than the white,
To the tothyr ston wente they tho.
thanne the Rede dragown syen they there,
that more oryble was thanne the toþer were.
thanne was the peple abasched wel more
an hundred Fold thanne they weren to-fore;
For more Feers he was & more hydows,
also more Egre, & mochel more Spytows,
thanne the whyte was Jn ony degre,
thus thowghte the peple, ful certeynle.
and more likely to win the battle.
So that thowghte kyng Fortager
that the Rede the white scholde scomfyten ther.
thanne seide merlyne to the kyng:
"Now haue my borwes excused for alle thyng!"
"merlyne," quod Fortager, "so they be,
Of alle thinges qwyt, ful Sekerle."
[leaf 99 *d*] A terrible struggle begins;
Thanne to-gederis Ronnen these dragowns tweyne
Ful vigerously there, Jn certeyne,
with here teeth and here pawes so scharpe,
that wondyr Jt is of here Fyhtyng to carpe.
Fo[r] Neuere herden ȝe telle jnto this day

2839. *tweyne*, the last letters almost obliterated.
2843. MS. *ffo*.

Of tweyne bestes swich anothir afray.
and thus veleynesly gonnen they fyhte
al that day, tyl jt was Nyhte,
and vppon the Morwen, tyl it was day,
So that al the peple that the bataylle say,
wenden þat the Rede þe whyte scholde han slayn,
so spetows was þe bataylle betwixen hem tweyn;
Tyl atte laste the white dragown
caste fyr on þe Rede abowtes jn vyrown,
and hym there brende to the ded;
So hadde the white victorye in that sted.
and the thrydde day aftyr next sewenge
Deyde the white dragown, with-owten lesenge.
So that they seyden thanne Everychon
that so gret a Merveille seyn they Neuere non.
thanne quod Merlyne to kyng Fortagere:
"Now begynne thy towr, and maket here
as gret as þou wylt, and also hy,
For it schal neuere fallen, trewly."
Thanne comanded Fortager anon
that jn haste this werk scholde be don.
So that this towr they maden ful hy,
Ful large, and Ryht strong, sekerly.
thanne of Merlyne often axede þe kyng
what of the dragouns was þe signefyeng.
"Sire kyng, it is forto Signefye
thynges þat han ben & scholen ben, trewelye;
and ȝif that thou wylt Enswren me here
Me not to deseisen Jn non Manere,
Ne non Man with-jnne thy kyngdom
To don Me non Maner of distroccion,
J schal the tellen the Signefyaunce
a-forn thy cownseyl, with-owten dowtaunce."
thanne kyng Fortager Ensured hym anon,
that Neuere harm to hym scholde be don.
"Go thanne faste," quod Merlyne anon,
"and sende aftyr thy cownseyl Everychon,
and also aftyr thy clerkis jn fere,

it lasts a day and a night.

At length the white dragon burns up the red;

he expires, himself, on the third day.

The building of the tower can now be continued.

Merlin is asked about the signification of the dragons.

On condition of personal safety,

he promises to explain it all.

Councillors and astrologers are sent for.

2876. *thy*, *h* inserted afterwards.

To heren what that j schal seyen here."
thanne dede fortager his comaundement;
and whanne they weren comen alle present,
Merlin first reproves the astrologers for undertaking what they cannot accomplish.
thanne seide Merlyne amonges hem alle:
"3e clerkis ben folys, what so befalle,
to Entermeten 3ow of ony thyng,
but 3if 3e cowden bryngen it to Endyng.
and in as Moche as folys that 3e be,
and fowle han faylled, ful certeinle,
3e ben worthy to haven 3owre gwerdon,
that 3e han deservyd be Ryht Reson.
He tells of their dark studies, and how the devil has shown them that they must die for Merlin's sake.
wel wot j 3e syen that j was bore,
but he that schewede it to 3ow thore,
schewed 3ow there ful openlye
that For me scholden 3e Nedys deye;
and also gret doel he schewed 3ow there,
For he hadde me lost jn swich Manere;
whiche was 3oure cause, ful certeynle,
to comaunden kyng Fortager me forto sle.
but swych a lord j hope that j have,
thorwgh goddis helpe, me forto save;
He declares he will make the devil a liar, if they promise to follow Merlin's injunctions.
and the devel a lyere schal j Make,
3e scholen neuere deyen for My sake,
3if that Sewrawnce 3e wylen Me do
of thyng that j schal speken 3ow vnto."
[leaf 100 a]
Whanne that they Herdyn Merlyne so seyn,
The astrologers are delighted.
thanne ful of Joye weren they, ful pleyn,
So of here deth Excused to be,
and seiden to Merlyne ful benyngnele:
" what Evere thou biddist vs to don,
we scholen it Fulfillen Ryht anon.
For we knowen wel, with-owten lesynge,
that þou art the wysest Man levenge."
Merlin commands them to give up their practices,
"3e scholen me Ensuren, Er that 3e gon,
of this craft neuere to Entermeten Non.
and j comande 3ow alle jn fere
to confess,
To ben confessid with herte clere,
and to do penance.
and 3oure flesch to putten jn discyplyne
to strong subiecciown & to gret pyne,
that 3owre Sowles ne dampned be;

doth as j cownseille ȝow, certeinle!"
So that they thankyd hym Everychon,
and grauntyd his comaundement to don.

The astrologers gratefully assent.

Thus Merlyne deliuered the clerkys Echon,
that hym deden seken for this Encheson.
thanne to Merlyne spak kyng Fortagere:
"thou behyhgtest forto tellen Me here
the signefycaciown of the dragowns tweyne."
"The white dragown, j telle the certeyne,
Signefyeth here the sone of costantyn,
That falsly was browht to Evele fyn."
and whanne Fortager herde this,
Ful sore he was aschamed, J-wys.
Thanne seide Merlyne to Fortager aȝe:
"and thou wylt konnen Me non Mawgre,
j schal the tellen the syngnefyaunce
of alle thynges, with-owten dowtaunce."
"here Js non Man," quod Fortager thanne,
"but of My cownseyl Every Manne;
where-fore, Sire Merlyne, j preye the
the syngnefyaunce that þou wost tellen Me.
"The Rede dragown here doth syngnefye
thyn owne persone, ful trewelye;
and why, Sire, and jn what Manere,
J schal tellen the anon Ryht here.
wel knowest thow, kyng Fortagere,
that kyng costantynes children al jn fere
dwelden here aftyr here Fadris ded,
that hadden Neyther cownseyl ne Red.
and ȝif þou haddest don thy dever, trewely,
thou scholdest hem han kept ful tendyrly,
and to have ȝoven hem ful trewe cownsaylle,
that Myhte ony thyng to the Rewm avaylle.
and wel knowest thou jn what Manere
the hertes of the peple thou hast geten here.
and whanne thow knew alle here Entent,
and that they loveden the, verament,

They are released.

Then Merlin explains that the white dragon signifies Pendragon.

Fortager feels confused.

Merlin adds,

before the whole council,

that the red dragon is the king himself.

He reminds him of the three princes,

whom he ought to have protected;

the way he stole the people's hearts;

2930. *white*, MS. *Rede* (!).

his refusal to help the young king;

thanne, whanne thou knew this, certeynle,
From alle maner of Nedis thou withdrowh the.
and whanne that the peple Sowhte socowr
of the to haven For here grete langowr,
and the desireden kyng forto han ben,
thou hem answeredest as þou schalt sen:

his artful manner of rejecting the crown;

Ful smotheliche and jn this manere
To hem thou answeredest, al jn fere,
that thow woldest neuere here kyng be,
whyles that the kyng lyvede, ful sykerle.
Thanne they that thou toldest to this tale,
Thowghten the kyng to werkyn Bale,
and knewen wel be thy maner of spekyng
that thou desiredest the kynges mordryng;

the murder of King Costantin; the flight of the princes;

and so hym they slowen ful falsly.
thanne fledden bothe his bretheren ful prevyly
For the drede that they hadde of the.
and thus art thow kyng ful falsle,

[leaf 100 b]

And thus the Regne thou ocupyest With Wrong,
and gret distrocciown dost Evere among.

and the execution of the regicides.

thanne, whanne they comen aȝen to the
be whiche the kyng ded was, Sykerle,
thanne distroyedest þou hem Everychon,
so that on lyve ne lefte not on."
thanne seide the cownseil to Fortager there:
"Herkene what Merlyne seith now here."

Fortager acknowledges the truth of Merlin's words,

"ȝis, Forsothe," quod kyng Fortager,
"He seyth ful soth that he seith her.
and j knowe ful wel that thou art
a passing wis man jn Every part.

and desires to know about his own death.

but of on thing, Merlyne, j preye to the
the sothe that thow wost tellen to me:
on what deth that J schal deye."

Merlin applies more distinctly to Fortager what he has said of the red

"that kan j wel," quod Merlyne, "trewelye.
have j not told to the the signyfiaunce
of bothe dragouns, with-owten varyaunce?
ȝit j wele that thou knowe be me
that the Rede dragown, Sykerle,

2980. *ded*, the last *d* through correction.
2994. *varyaũce*, *v* corrected from *f*.

Signefyeth thyn owne persone,
that was so strong and myhty of bone;
and the whit dragown signefieth, certeinle, — and of the white dragon,
the tweyne bretheren that now fled j-be,
For drede that thou wost han hem slayn;
this js the signyfyaunce, Jn certayn.
and why so longe they fowhten so snelle, — their long fight,
the signyfyaunce j schal the telle:
jt signyfieth that thou hast so long j-holde
wrongfully here Erytage with werkis bolde.
and þat the white dragown þe Rede brende so, — and the burning of the red one.
the same the children scholen the do.
and knowe thou wel now, jn certeyn,
that thike tyme thy towr stont but jn veyn,
and the ne schal warauñte nonthyng, jn feye;
and jn this Maner, Fortager, schalt thou deye."
thanne, whanne Fortager herde this, — Fortager asks where the princes are.
anon he axede of Merlyne, J-wys,
where that thyke tweyne children be.
"jn the see," quod Merlyne, "ful Sykerle, — Merlin answers: "On the sea, on their way here,
with ful gret strengthe and gret Navye,
jnto this lond to a-ryven, ful Sekerlye,
veniance of the to taken here, — to take vengeance!"
that slowh here brothir jn swich Manere.
and wete þou wel, with-jnne thre Monthis day
they scholen aryven, sire, jn good fay!"

Ful sory was kyng Fortager tho, — *Chap. III.*
whanne he herde tellen it scholde be so, — King Fortager, greatly troubled,
and axede of Merlyne anon Ryht
ȝif that ony othirwyse it myhte ben dyht.
"Nay, syker, Fortager," quod Merlyne tho,
"Non othirwyse now ne may it go."
and whanne that fortager wiste al this,
that tho children scholde comen, j-wys,
thanne warnede he his peple anon — calls in his forces.
that to hym scholden they comen ful son,
aȝens that jlke same day
That Merlyne hym of tolde, with-owten Nay.

Fortager goes to Winchester.

So that to wynchestre he gan to go,
and al his power with him tho.
but the cawse wiste neuere a man,
but they that of his cownseyl weren than.

Merlin goes to Northumberland,

and whanne Merlyne hadde endyd this mater,
thanne took he his leve of kyng Fortager,
and thanne forth to blase he gan to gon,
and told hym of these merveilles echon.

[leaf 100 c]

So that Blayse gan hem to Wryte,
and jnto his Book forto endyte.

and stays with Blasy.

So that Merlyne with Blayse dwellede there,
tyl þe bretheren aftyr hym gonnen enqwere.
and kyng Fortager at wynchestre abod,
as he be Merlyne ferst vndirstood.

The people of Winchester see a large fleet approaching.

And that same day, with-owten lesynge,
the peple of Wynchestre syen comenge
Fer jn the see a ful gret Navye,
where-offen they merveilled, ful trewelye;
jn whiche vesselys weren, certeynle,
both costantynes sones, as j telle the.

Fortager orders his men to defend the harbour.

and whanne that Fortager herde of this,
Ful sore he was abasched, j-wys,
and comaunded his men to armes anon
alle so faste as they myhten gon,
and also his port forto defende,
therto he bad hem forto atende.

They perceive the banners of their rightful king.

& whanne at the port they weren echon,
thanne beheldẽ they jn-to the se anon,
and Syen here ryhtful kynges banere
Ful openly displayed ryht there,
wheche weren the armes of costantyn;
they knewen the confanouns wele & fyn.
thanne merveillede this peple everichon
how that this thing thus myhte be don.

The fleet lands.

So that these vesselis aryvede to londe,
as J do 3ow to vndirstonde.
and whanne to londe a-ryved they were,
thanne axede the peple of hem there

3036. *and, d* partly obliterated.

what manere of peple was there with-jnne.
thanne answerid they, & wolde not blynne:
"They ben the vesselis of Pendragown,
that to this Rewm hath good Resown;
and also vter, his brothir so dere,
jnto his Rewm with him cometh here
of Fortager Forto taken veniaunce,
that hem hath don ful gret Noysaunce,
and as a fals man, J vndirstond,
vntrewely & vniostly halt he here lond."
and whanne that the peple vndirstod this,
that it was here owne lord, J-wys,
That with hym browhte so gret meyne,
thanne weren they abasched, ful Sykyrle,
and nolden non thyng ajens hem do,
Lest aftyr it myhte hem tornen to moche wo,
and comen and seiden to Fortager,
that ajens hem wolden they not fyhten ther.
and whanne Fortager this vndirstood,
thanne for wraththe he was nyhe wood.
thanne spak he to his owne men,
that hym wolde not Forsaken than,
the castel wel to kepen ouer alle thyng.
so seyden they wolden, with-owten fayllyng.
thanne a-ryvede these schepis there anon,
and the peple of the cuntre thider faste gonne gon,
and ajens hym they wenten be on acord,
& there hym resceyveden as here lord.
thanne kyng Fortager with his meyne,
to his castel wenten they ful hastyle.
and there bothe bretheren be on asent
hym vigerously asayllede, verament.
So that Pandragoun Fyr dede jn caste
jnto that castel, that brende ryht faste,
where-jnne this Fortager Syker was brent,
as this storye scheweth, verament.
And thus tooken bothe bretheryn Jn Fere
harde veniaunce on here enemyes there.

Being told that Pendragon and Uter have come to take vengeance on Fortager,

the treacherous usurper,

they refuse to fight.

Fortager, mad with rage,

exhorts his adherers.

The people receive their lawful prince.

Fortager flees to a castle.

The princes attack it,

and set fire to it.

Fortager perishes in the flames.

[leaf 100 *d*]

3093. *he* added above the line.

Fortager's kinsmen (see p. 52) are driven into another castle.

thanne the kynnes-men of Fortager
vppon the crystene werreden ther,
and the tweyne bretheren gonnen hem asaylle,
and jnto a castel hem droven, Sauns faylle.

The princes confer how to conquer it.

thanne took pandragon cownseyl there,
and vter his brothyr, alle Jn fere,
how that thike castel they Myhten wynne
and ek the peple that was with-jnne.

Five barons who were present at the dragons' fight,

at whiche cownseyl fyve barouns there were,
that to-forn tyme the dragowns syen fyhten there,
and herden al the significaciown.
how that Merlyne tolde al & Som
of tho tweyne dragowns to Fortager,

tell the princes about Merlin,

To Pandragown and to his brothir they tolden ther,
and of the Merveylles Everychon
that Merlyne hem tolde be on and be on.
"and wete ȝe wel, Syres, that he Js on
the wysest Man, except god alon."
thanne seide Pandragown to these Barowns:
"where dwellith that Man & in whiche Regyowns?"

but do not know where to find him.

"we weten Neuere," quod they ageyn,
"where hym to fynden, Jn certeyn,
Neþer jn what contre hym to have,
also god oure sowles Moot save!
and ȝif he be owht jn this partye,
we scholen hym fynde, wel Sekerlye."

Messengers are sent in search of him.

thanne forth sente pandragown anon
Messengeris, as faste as they cowde gon,
To serchen al the lond owt ryht,
ȝif that there cowde ony wyht
hem tellen Merlyne Forto Fynde,
that holden was so gentyl & kynde.

Merlin meets them in a town, where they are taking a meal.

And Merlyne, that knew al this ful wel,
Tolde it to Blayse thanne Everydel,
and from Blayse thanne wente anon,
& Forth to a town he gan to gon,
there as the Messengeris at Mete were.
and jn this Gyse to hem cam he there:

3113. MS. *him*. 3130. *in* added above the line.
3141. *ffynde*, *n* corrected from *y*.

lik as a schepperde he hadde j-be,
with a staf on his Nekke, ful sekerle,
and ek a peyre of ful Boystous schoon,
vppon his Feet thanne were they doon,
and vppon hym a clowted cote,
that heng adown abowten his throte,
and therto he hadde a ful gret berd,
þerwith to han Mad Many Men aferd,
So that he Semede jn alle degre
a man of Evel lykynge, ful sekyrle.
and thus to þe same place he cam anon
þere as þe Messengeres Eten Everichon,
and seide to hem Jn this Manere:
"Ful Evel don ȝe ȝoure dèver here
and ȝoure lordis arende also,
Forto Seken Merlyne that ȝe scholden go."
and whanne they herde thus hym Seyn,
"what jn þe devellis name, be-hold this veleyn!
where-offen with sorwe smateryth he
of ony thing that to vs longeth forto be?"
"jn feith," quod Merlyne thanne ageyn,
"and j hym scholde seken, jn certeyn,
J scholde hym Fynde Sonnere thanne ȝe,
j telle ȝow, Sires, ful Sykerle."
thanne Resen these Messengeris anon,
and toward Merlyne they gonne to gon,
& him þere axede anon Ryht
ȝif he him knew be day oþer be Nyht.
"ȝys, Forsothe, J Knowe Hym Ryht Wel
and al his abydyng Every del.
but that he tolde Me, Jn certeyn,
that ȝowre travaylle was but jn veyn;
For thowgh ȝe fownden him jn this contre,
with ȝow wolde he not gon, Sykerle.
but goth to ȝowre lord now ageyn faste,
and that the castel to taken he have non haste,
tyl that Augwys be ded other slayn,
of wheche castel he js lord, certayn.

He appears in the shape of a shepherd,

with a huge forbidding beard,

and tells them that they do their duty badly.

They are indignant.

He adds that he could find Merlin quicker than they.

They then rise and ask if he knows him.

[leaf 101 *a*]
"Yes," says Merlin,

"but he would not go with you. Tell your lord to leave the castle, till Augwis is dead,

3166. MS. *develli/name.*
3176. *he* corrected from *they.*

—two of those five barons are dead already—

and wete ȝe wel that of thyke barownes fyve
there ben but thre now left on lyve,
that Ferst tolden the kyng of Merlyne,
whiche that cowde so mochel of devyne.
and þerfore to ȝowre lord that ȝe telle,
what Maner aventure so hym befalle,
ȝif that Merlyne he wyle with speke,

and to come here himself."

jnto this contre hym-Self moste reke,
and aftyr him Serchen jn Market & town
abowtes al this contre Jn vyrown."

The messengers look at each other in surprise, and Merlin disappears.

The messengeris vndirstoden riht wel
what to hem that seide Merlyne everydel,
an ech of hem on other lokede welfaste;
thussone Merlyne owt of here syhte was paste.
thanne spoken they to-gederes hem be-twene:
"*with* the devel haven we spoken, j wene.
what Scholen we don of this Mateer
That he to vs spak of now heer?"

They resolve to return home.

"Infeyth," quod on of that compenye,
"To owre lord welfaste we scholen vs hye,
and aforn hym to rehersen we scholen ben bolde
every word as this man hath vs tolde."
and forth they ryden everychon,
Tyl jnto that ost they comen anon

Before the king and his retinue,

There as the kyng was with his meyne;
Streyht to hym comen they, ful Sykerle.
whanne þat kyng Pandragoon gan be-holde,
For joye he be-gan his armes to Folde,
and hem axede anon there presente:
"han ȝe owht Fownde for that ȝe wente?"

they tell what has happened.

"The sothe to tellen we ȝow enswre,
how it vs happede, and what aventure."
That tolden they the kyng, with-owten lak,
jn what Maner this veleyn to hem Spak.

Those acquainted with Merlin, marvel at the hideous shape of the soothsayer,

thanne they that herden hem speken jn this manere,
that to-forn tyme knewen Merlyne there,
Merveyllede that ony so hydows a man
to hem swich Materis Scholde meven than.
For they wisten not, *with*-owten dowtance,

that Merlyne cowde taken ony oþer semblaunce
but onlyche his owne Jn properte;
Of this Merveyleden they, ful certeynle.
but thanne wisten they there ageyn
that no man ne cowde not, jn certeyn,
tellen of tho wondris alle
Sauf on[l]y Merlyne, how so befalle.
thanne axeden [they] þe messengeris jn hye
jn what maner of contre that they hym sye.
thanne answerede the messengeris ageyn:
"To oure Jn he cam, Jn certeyn,
there as we ten, 3e mown vndirstond,
jn the contre of Northhumberlond."
thanne seiden they holiche, al that nowte,
that jt was merlyne with-owten dowte,
& that he desirede aftyr here knoweng,
onliche that there him scholde seken the kyng.
and whanne they comen jnto Northhumberlond,
as J do 3ow vtterly forto vndirstond,
Non tydynges ne cowden they heren ther
of Merlyne, the devyn, nethir Fer ne Ner.
and as the kyng there gan forth to Ryde
Jn his jornes be eche a syde,
and as thorwgh a pleyn he gan to gon
and with him his meyne everichon,
they syen a drove of bestes ful gret
and therto an herdeman keping that hepe.
so that they axede hym anon
whens he was, & whedir he wolde gon,
"Sires, j do 3ow to vndirstonde
that j am of Northhumberlonde.
and Rihtnow a good man cam to me,
and seide that kyng Pandragon sikerle
jn this contre a man scholde Seke
that is bothe wys, good, and meke."
"that is fulsoth," quothen they thanne,
"kanst þou vs owht tellen of that manne?"

but understand that no one but Merlin can have told such things.

Hearing that the incident took place in Northumberland,

all feel convinced.

The king goes to Northumberland in [leaf 101 b] search of Merlin.

One day they see a herd with a drove of cattle.

The herd speaks to the king's men about Merlin.

3232. MS. *ony.* 3233. MS. *axeden þe.*
3237. *there*, the first *e* blurred.
3241. *&* added in the left margin. 3244. *vtterly*, *v* blurred.

thanne answerid this vyleyn ageyn :
The herd says he has some news to impart to the king privately, "ȝe, and J myhte sen the kyng, jn certeyn,
j wolde hym tellen of swich tydyng
of wheche to ȝow j ne wele Schewen non thing."
"thanne com with me," quod this good man,
"and to the kyng j wele schewen the anon."
thanne quod this vileyn to him ageyn :
"my bestes scholde j evele kepen, jn certein ;
but is not willing to leave his cattle. but ȝif he wele comen hidir to me,
J schal hym tellen, ful certeinle,
Where he schal fynde that ilke persone
For whom jnto this contre he is gone."
thanne departyd he from this vileyn anon,
The king is informed, and to the kyng streyht is he gon,
and tolde the kyng jn Wordis fewe
the Wordis of the vilein al on rewe.
"Anon lede me thedyr," quod the kyng,
"and lete vs make non lengere taryeng!"
and comes quickly to the spot. thus thanne ladde he forth þe kyng jn hye
to that same herdeman, ful trewelye.
thanne seide this goodman to that vyleyn :
"lo, Felawe, here is the kyng, certeyn ;
Now telle him here thy lykyng,
For siker þou be, this is the kyng."
"Thou seekest Merlin," says the herd. "Sire kyng, forsothe J telle now the
that merlyne thou sekyst, ful sekyrle.
but to fynden he is ful ylle,
but ȝif hym-self wile concente þertylle.
"Go into the nearest town, and he shall come to thee." And therefore jnto the nexte town thou go,
and thussone he schal comen the to.
with the [to spe]ken þere wil he ful ryht,
J sey the tr[ewe]ly, ful gentyl knyht."
"how schal j hym knowen?" quod the kyng,
"but ȝif of hym J hadde som tokenyng?"
"Sire kyng, ȝif that thou leve not me,
Sey ellis of Fals cownseyl that j be!"
The king believes him. "J mistroste not," quod the kyng tho,
"But that it is trewe thou seist me to."

3293–94. Hole burnt in the paper.
3300. *it*, corrected from *is*.

so paste the kyng thanne forth anon
owt of þat forest, to towne gan he gon.
And thussone to hym cam there
a semly man, arayed jn onest manere,
and seide: "sire kyng, welfownde ȝe be!
Merlyne, the devyn, sente me to the,
and sente the to seyne, ful sekerlye,
that the same was merleyne, trewelye,
whiche kepte the bestes Jn here pasture,
And, sire, be this tokene, J ȝow ensure,
that to towne scholde he comen to the,
whanne þou of hym haddest nede, sikerle.
But non gret mester ȝit Hast thow,
and of goode tydynges J schal tellen the now,
that merlyne sente the to say
by me, sire kyng, this same day.
knowe thow wel, for certeynlye,
that kyng haugwis is ded, trewelye,
and þat thy brothir vter hath hym slayn,
wite thou wel this, pandragon, jn certayn."
and whanne the kyng herde this,
Ful mochel thanne he merveilled, j-wys.
"Js this trewe that thou tellest me?"
"Sire, ȝe, for he wyle not lyen, sykerle,
and a fool thou art, but thou it leve,
For here-offen the sothe wel schalt þou preve."

In the town there comes a seemly man,

who tells that the herd and Merlin are the same person,

that Merlin will visit him in time of need,

[leaf 101 *c*]

and that Augwis has been slain.

The king is surprised.

Thanne charged the kyng tweyne messengeris anon
that Jn alle haste they scholden gon—
"to knowen ȝif this thing now trewe be,
and doth me to wetene ful hastyle."
so forth reden the messengeris anon,
and with othir messengeris metten they thusson,
From vter to pandragown, jn that sted,
hym forto tellen how haugwys was ded.
whanne þe messengeris thus metten jn fere,
aȝen to-gideris tornede [they] in fayr manere,
and hym tolden jn cownseyl, certayn,

He sends messengers to ascertain the truth.

They meet other messengers, who bring the news of Augwis' death.

3326. *preve*; before is a crossed-out *b*. 3336. MS. *tornede in*.

jn what Maner vter haugwys hadde slayn.
The king enjoins secrecy, thanne charged the kyng hem ful hyghly
that this thing, algates to kepen Jt prevy,
and is full of wonder. and Merveillede gretliche ouer alle thyng
how Merlyne of this scholde haue knoweng,
and Jn his herte Merveilled ful gretle
Jn what Maner that haugwys ded scholde be,
and thowhte of Merlyne More to Enqwere,
3if of that Mater he cowde tellen hym there.
so that al a day jn that town gan he abyde,
When coming out of church the same day, he is accosted by a seemly man, and as from the Mynstre he cam þat tyde,
with hym there Mette a semly Man,
and to kyng Pandragon he seide than:
"Sire kyng, al heyl and wel thou be!
here jn this town what thyng seken 3e?"
"j abyde Merlyne," quod the kyng,
"with hym to haue som Maner of spekyng."
"Sire kyng," quod this good Man thanne,
"j ne hold 3ow not 3it so wys a manne
Merlyne to knowen, thowgh 3e hym aye,
J sey 3ow, sire kyng, ful sekyrlye.
who says he is Merlin. and þerfore clepeth hem that him han se,
and axe of hem 3if that Merlyne j be."
The king's followers are summoned; So that the kyng, for hem he sente anon,
and toforn hym comen they Everychon.
"Lordynges," quod the kyng to hem thanne,
"here byden we Merlyne, þat worthy Manne.
Js þere ony of 3ow that hym kan knowe,
and he here stood jn this Rowe?"
they say they would certainly recognize Merlin, if they saw him. "Forsothe, sire kyng, that May not be
but 3if we hym Syen, ful sikerle."
thanne seide this goodman to the kyng:
"this were now a wondirful thing,
how that anothir Man they scholde knowe,
whanne þat hem-self they konnen neþer hy ne lowe."
thanne answered these lordis ageyn:
"his werkis we knowen not, jn certeyn,
but his Semblaunce we knowen ful wel,

3373. *answered*, the first *e* corrected from *r*.

and we hym syen Everydel."
thanne seide this goodman to hem ageyn:
"how scholde ȝe ony Man knowen, jn certeyn,
but ȝif ȝe knowen his Semblaunce?
This Were to me a Wondyrful chawnce."
thanne clepede Merlyne the kyng anon,
and jnto a prevy chambre they gonne to gon,
and seide: "sire kyng, J am joyful of the
and of ȝoure brothyr, sire, ful certeinle.
For J am the same persone, with-owten dwere,
that ȝe comen forto Seken here.
Now goth owt of this chambre anon,
and ledeth me toforn hem Echon
that tolden to ȝow they cowde knowen Me,
and they alle wylen seyn, ful sykerle,
that ȝe haven fownden the same Merlyne
whiche that they clepen the goode devyne."
thanne wente Pandragown forth anon,
and clepid his Meyne Everychon.
thanne took Merlyne his owne Semblaunce,
that he to-forn hadde, with-owten variaunce.
and thanne, anon as they hym Sye,
they seiden it was Merlyne, trewlye.
"thanne avyse ȝow wel," quod the kyng,
"that it be Merlyne with-owten lesyng."
and they seiden: "wel we hym knowe
among alle this peple jn this Rowe."
"j wolde fayn weten," quod the kyng,
"ȝif j Evere to ȝow spak ony thyng,
Er that j cam jnto this town;
of this wolde j fayn knowen þe Resown."
"Sire," quod Merlyne to the kyng thanne,
"For certeyn, J am the same Manne
that walkede ȝondir jn ȝone forestes,
kepyng alle tho forseid bestes.
also the same Man am J
that told ȝow of haugwys, trewely."
thanne seide the kyng to hem ageyn:
"Evele knowen ȝe Merlyne, jn certeyn!"
thanne axede the kyng of merlyne there

[leaf 101 *d*]

Merlin takes the king into a private room,

repeats who he is,

and asks to be brought before the retinue again.

Merlin assumes his natural shape,

and is recognized by all.

In answer to the king's question,

he says he is the same as the cowherd,

and the same who told him of Augwis' death.

how of augwis he knew and jn what manere. 3416

Merlin further tells how he warned Uter against Augwis,

" Sire," quod merlyne, " as it not ben scholde,
Augwys vter mordred han wolde.
Anon to thy brothyr j wente jn hye,
and told hym al his purpos vtterlye, 3420
and how that augwys hym ordeynede to sle;
al this j told hym, ful Sykerle.
and 3it he ne wolde not me beleve,
tyl that the sothe him-self dede preve. 3424

how Uter kept awake all night,

so that 3owre brothir wook alone al nyht,
tyl that the sothe he preven myht,
and evere awayted the comenge
of Augwis, þat was so crewel a kynge. 3428

how Augwis came stealing into Uter's tent with a drawn knife,

thanne atte laste cam this haugwis
jnto vteris pavyloun, þat was of prys.
and 3oure brothir let hym entren anon,
with a scharpe knyf drawen, jnto his won, 3432
hym forto hauen slayn, verayment.
so þat vter he sowhte al abowtes þe tent,
but he ne cowde hym not Fynde,
wherfore he mornede jn his mynde. 3436
and owt a3en he wolde han gon,
but 3oure brothir mette with hym anon.

and how Augwis was killed.

So there fowhten they to-gederis, jn certayn,
that vter, 3oure brothyr, hath hym slayn." 3440

Whanne that the kyng herde al this,
anon he axede of hym, j-wis,
jn what Semblance he myhte be,
whanne that with his brothir spak he. 3444

Merlin was on that occasion in an old man's shape. [leaf 102 *a*]

" Sire," quod Merlyne thanne a-geyn,
" Jn lykenesse of an old man, certeyn."
" Tolde 3e Owht hym What man 3e Were?"
" nay, sire," quod merlyne, " jn non manere; 3448
Nethyr he ne schal not it knowen for me,
tyl 3owre-Self it hym telle, ful Sikerle."

The king asks Merlin to go with him.

Thanne seide to hym Pandragown, the kyng:
" Now, dere Frend, j preye 3ow ouer alle thyng 3452
that 3e wylen now gon with me,
For of 3oure cownseyl have j nede, parde."

"Sire, thanne sone wyle 3oure Meyne wroth be,
3if that 3e Welen owht leven on Me."
"Merlyne, 3e han so Mochel to Me told
of vter, My brothir, Many fold,
that 3if it now soth be,
For Evere schal j now leven on the."
"thanne vndirstonde 3e, *with*-owten varyaunce,
þat J to 3owre [brothir] schal speken jn the same semblaunce
that J was, whanne j hym tolde, certeyn,
how that haugwys hym wolde han slayn,
and that *with*-jnne this viij dayes it schal be.
"thanne preye j 3ow, Merlyne, for charite,
that j Moot knowen the same Face,
whanne 3e with hym speken jn ony place."
"that scholen 3e, Sire, with good wille.
but of on thyng J Sey 3ow vntille:
that 3if Evere ony love 3e wyle haven of Me,
So that 3e kepen Jt Jn prevyte."

Merlin replies that the courtiers would object,

but promises to speak again with Uter in that same shape of an old man,

and to let the king know.

Thus aqweyntyd Merlyne with Pendragown,
and of hym took leve Jn that town.
So Forth to Blasye he gan to gon,
and dide hym it putten jn scripture anon,
that so be hym knowen we this storye,
wheche to vs is put Jn Memorye.
And Pandragown held forth his weye,
tyl that to his brothyr he cam, jn feye.
& whanne that vter his brothyr Say,
Ful Mochel Joye he Made that day,
and took the kyng anon on side,
and *þere* hym tolde that ilke tyde
how that haugwis he had slayn,
lik as Merlyne him ferst hadde told, certeyn.
"Now, goode brother, what myht he be,
That ferst discured to 3ow *þis* destyne?"
"Now, so me god helpe," quod vter thanne,
"j *mer*veillede neuere so Mochel of Manne.

Merlin and Pendragon part.

The former goes to Blasy,

the latter returns home.

Uter relates of Augwis' death.

The king inquires about the man who gave the warning.

3462. MS. *3owr' fchal.*
3487–88. These two lines were omitted and then written up the margin.

Uter is surprised that the king should know anything about this,

Of that ȝe me Seyn jn this throwe
whiche j wende neuere but that God and j hadde knowe.
and therfore I preye ȝow, for charyte,
how that ȝe jt wiste, now telleth me."
"J seye ȝow sekerly," quod Pandragown,
"j Jt now knowe be good Resown.
but, brothir vter, what good man was he
that from the deth warawnted the?"
"be the oth þat j owe to ȝow, my kyng,
j schal ȝow trewly seyn, to my knoweng.
j not what maner of man jt was,

but says that the warner seemed to be a good man.

but a good man he semede jn every plas,
and therefore the bettere j gan hym leve,
For aftyr, the sothe he dede me preve."
"Cowde ȝe hym knowen," quod Pandragown tho,
"jn ony place and he to-fore ȝow go?"
"ȝe, sire, forsothe," quod vter thanne,
"J schal hym knowen to-forn anothir manne."

The king tells that on a certain day the same man will call again.

"wel, Sire vter, thanne warne j the
that with-jnne xij dayes he wyle here be,
and only with ȝow wil he speke,
and to ȝow his herte wyle he breke.
but of on thing j preye ȝow, certeinle:

Uter promises to remain in the king's presence the whole of that day. [leaf 102 *b*]

that al that day ȝe ben to-forn me,
that j myhte knowen, as wel as ȝe,
what maner of man þat so he be."
And vter be-hyghte that so he Wolde,
and not to letten for ȝong neþer olde.
and thus bothe the bretheren Jn fere
of diuers materis spoken there.
and merlyne forth to Blasye wente,

Merlin informs Blasy of the last events,

and tolde hym alle these poyntes, veramente,
how the tweyne bretheryn of hym gomne speke,
& how þat vter of his fo gan hym wreke,
and how that Pandragown wolde hym asaye
be many poyntes and many a waye.
thanne axede blasie of merlyne there
how they lyveden and jn what manere.

3492. The first *j* added above the line.
3527. *blafie* added above the line.

thanne seide Merlyne to blasie ageyn
that—"bothe ben they ȝonge Men, jn certeyn,
and gret nede they haven of good cownsaylle
of swich a Man that Myhte hem avaylle.
but fyrst jnto Mirthe j wolde hem drawe
with lawghenges & boordes to Maken hem fawe.
For j wot wel where woneth a fayr lady
that vter Loveth, paramours, trewely,
and so streyht to hym wyl j gon
with a lettre from his love anon.
For j knowe alle the wordis preve
that betwixen hem to-fore tyme hath be."

And þe xj day thanne next Sewenge,
To cowrt cam Merlyne faste rennenge
jn liknesse of a groom Messenger
that from his Love to hym cam ther,
and seide: "my lady greteth ȝow wel
with herte and Body Everydel,
and sente ȝow here a lettre to Rede
alone be ȝoure-self jn prevy stede."
thanne took vter this lettre, verament,
and wende his love hadde it hym sent,
and Ryht gret Joye he gan to Make
of þe lettre for his loves sake.
thanne spak the lettre jn this Manere,
þat the Messenger he scholde lestene & here
and trowen that he to hym seide,
For so on hym hire arende sche leyde.
and this Messenger tolde Many prevy thyng
that vter had offen Ryht good knoweng,
so that þe bettyr wil hadde he to dwelle
For thinges þe Messenger gan hym telle.
thus alday taryede kyng Pandragown,
Tyl the lyht of day was Ny agon,
and Merveillede of Merlynes taryenge,
and why that so Longe was his dwellenge.
thussone Merlyne drowh hym on syde,
and þere took anothir lyknesse that tyde,

of life and character of the princes,

and of his own plans for the nearest future.

On the fixed day, Merlin comes running to court as a messenger from Uter's lady-love.

The delighted prince takes the letter supposed to be sent by her,

and listens privately to the bearer.

Pendragon wonders at Merlin's delay.

Merlin calls Uter's attention:

3531. *cownſayll*, *a* corrected from *e*.
3539. *preve*, the first *e* corrected from *y*.

he stands there now in the warner's shape (cf. l. 3446).

Evene the same fygure and semblaunce
as whanne he warned vter of his chaunce.
Anon as vter him gan be-holde,

Uter embraces him,

he hym knew and jn armes gan folde,
and preyede hym for alle cowrtesye
with hym to abyden stedfastlye,
and that he wolde speken with the kyng
with-owten ony more taryeng.

and fetches Pendragon.

thanne tolde vter to Pandragown
that this good man was comen to town.
thanne axede the kyng of vter there
3if it were the same jn alle manere.
"3e, sire," quod vter, "with-owten dowte."
so forth wenten they bothe jn þat rowte,

Both princes are full of joy.

and comen bothe to this good man,
and þer of hym gret joye made than.
"wile 3e þat j to my brothir vter proclame
what man 3e ben and what is 3oure name?"

[leaf 102 *c*]

"3e, sire, J Wyle Wyth Ryht good Wylle
that to 3oure brothyr 3e seyn it vntylle."

Pendragon informs his brother that their visitor is the wisest of men,

thanne seide Pandragown to his brothyr dere:
"knowen 3e owht this man that is here?
J telle 3ow, brothir, ful certeinlye,
that this is the wisest man, trewlye,
that here on lyve may now be,
Of whom we han gret mester, ful sikerle.
For sweche konneng hath this man,
as here to-forn hym tellen j 3ow kan.

and that the warner and the letter-carrier are the same person.

for to 3ow cam non other messengere
but only this man that Js here.
and þe lettres tok 3ow this same man
that seide how he from 3oure love cam."
thanne abascht hym vter ful sore,
and of that man he wondred thore.

Uter is incredulous.

"how may j beleven this jlke thyng?
this were to me gret merveyllyng!"
"As wel mown 3e knowen this jlke dede
as of oþer thinges þat he to 3ow afore seide."

3592. MS. *Off*, through rough correction. 3595. MS. *fforto*.

thanne seide vter: "ful certeynle,
j kan not beleven that this scholde ben he."
the kyng preide Merlyne jn wordis fewe
that som Man*er* of tokeny*n*g he wold hym schewe.
"Goth forth fro*m* me," quod Mer*l*yne, "henne,
and ano*n* j schal don hym Me kenne.
For j wele proven hym þe same semblance
Of that Garsown, wi*th*-owten varyau*n*ce."
And forth he wente thanne anon,
and þa*t* same semblance he took thusson,
& cam to vter and took his leve,
For that þe sothe he scholde preve.
"brother, the sothe knowe*n* not now ȝe,
that this same verray Man Js he
that tolde how haugwis wolde ȝow han slayn?"
"ȝis, ful sekyr ȝe ben, brothyr, jn certeyn;
For bothe wete ȝe wel and vndirstonde
that he knoweth thinges jn dyvers londe,
bothe that is to come*n* and that js gon,
For of aventures kan he tellen Manyon.
wherefore, brothir, we welen hym preye
with vs to dwellen, be ony weye;
For aftyr his werkynge welen we do
of alle thinges that vs longen vnto."
thanne bothe bretheren gonnen hym beseche
wi*th* hem to dwellen, with ful fayr speche.
"For so mochel to vs haue*n* ȝe told
of dyvers thinges Manyfold,
wherefore that j beleve ȝow wel;
and that ȝe wolden Everydel
Taken Governaunce of My brothir and Me;
and it ȝow likede, it Myhte so be."
thanne answerede hem aȝen Mer*l*yne:
"this schal j granten ȝow wel and fyne,
but j wile that ȝe knowe*n*, certeinly,
of Myn doyng prevyly.
For ȝit Most j gon forther mo
to the hed of Gret Breteigne, how so j do.

The king appeals to Merlin.

Merlin appears again as messenger.

Uter is convinced

and praises Merlin's wisdom.

The brothers ask him to stay

and be their governor.

Merlin complies.

3626. *dwellen*, *w* corrected from *e*.
3635. *My*, *M* roughly corrected from *B*.
3642. *of* added above the line.

Merlin promises his help in all troubles,

but weteth wel that j schal haue knowenge
Of alle ȝowre nedis, with-owten varienge;
and Neuere deseisse schal j be ȝow se,
but that j schal helpen ȝow, Sekerle.
and þerfore chargeth not whanne j go,
For schortly schal j comen ȝow to.

and wishes to be openly welcomed when he comes to court.

and whanne that j come jnto ȝoure howshold,
loke þat ȝe joyen many fold
aforn ȝowre meyne jn my Syht,
[leaf 102 *d*] That there-offen mowe knowen Every Wyht."

Thus belefte merlyne with the kyng,
and with his Brother vter was dwellyng.

He goes

so atte laste from hem wolde he gon,
jn swich semblaunce þat they myhten hym knowen echon.

and comes,

So that whanne aȝen he cam,
of hym made joye bothe child & man,
and wenten and tolden to the kyng
at eche tyme of merlynes comyng.
and algates whanne þe kyng þere-of herde,
Ful mochel joye of hym he ferde,

and is always received with joy.

and algates wente hym forto mete,
were jt jn feld oþer Jn strete,
and gret joye of hym made.
and ek al the meyne was ful glade,
and token the kyng anon on syde,
& thore hym tolde þat Jlke tyde
that he was the beste devyn, trewly,
except god that is al-myhtty.

The people want his advice with regard to the besieged castle.

" Now preyeth hym, Jn alle wyse,
that he wolde tellen ȝow jn what gyse
how that the castel to bryngen to ende,
and how this werre atte laste schal wende,
and of his kyn to haven victorye;
of this axe ȝe hym, ful certeynlye."
the kyng answerede hem ageyn
that ryht gladliche he wolde it seyn.
whanne the thrydde day j-comen was,

3646. MS. *helpen.* 3648. *fchortly*, *r* corrected from *l*.

the cownseyl assemblede al jn on plas.
thanne the kyng aforn his cownseil
Enqwered of *Mer*lyne wondirly wel:
"Now, dere Frend," quod the kyng thanne,
"J knowe ȝow For Ryht a wys Manne,
and for the beste devyn J ȝow knowe
jn al this world, owthyr hyghe o*þer* lowe.
that ȝe wolden me tellen, j ȝow preye,
of diue*rs* thynges that J schal seye,
and how this castel that j schal have,
and Ek My Meyne, to kepen hem save."
thanne answeride Merlyne a-ġeyn:
"Syre, j wolde that ȝe wisten, ful fayn:
For sethen his kynnes-men haugwis hadden lost,
Sethen that tyme Maden they non bost,
Ne Rekken but lytel, the sothe to say,
owt of this lond to gon here way;
and to Morwe vndir trewe hem besende,
thanne fulsone schole ȝe knowe*n* the Ende,
how they scholen *pro*fre*n* to ȝelden ageyn
al *þat* they holden of ȝoure fadyr, certeyn.
but ȝit scholen ȝe not don so,
For whanne here answere cometh ȝow vnto,
ȝe schole*n* ȝow offren hem to conveye
be sauf cou*n*dit and be Ryht weye,
and owt of ȝoure lond hem don lede,
and scheping hem ordeyne*n* jnto what stede,
jnto what contre that they wylen gon;
thus to hem scholen ȝe answeren anon."
thanne the kyng Sente forth vlfyn
and thre other knyhtes with hym;
and *Mer*lyne hem charged with this Massage,
as they weren knyhtes of hygh parage.

Forth these Messengeris token here way
Streyht to the castel, as J ȝow say.
and whanne they with-jnne syen hem come*n*ge,
aȝens hem they come*n* *with*-owte*n* taryenge,
and axede of hem ȝif—"Messengeris ȝe be?"
thanne vlfyn answerede & seide: "ȝe,

3680 The king's council assembles,

and Merlin consulted

3684

3688

about the castle.

Merlin replies:

3692 "Augwis' kinsmen are now willing to leave the country.

3696

Parley with them!

They will first offer to

3700 remain as vassals.

But do not accept this offer!

3704

Let them go away!"

3708

The king accordingly sends Ulfin (cf. ll. 4745 ff. and three other knight

3712 as negotiators.

The people in the castle

3716 receive them

listen to their message,

the kyng 3ow sente be vs to seyn
that thre wykys trwys scholen 3e hauen, certeyn." 3720
"thanne to counseyl scholen we go,
To wyten how that we mown do.

[leaf 103 *a*] consider their own helpless condition,

Ryht Wondirfully sore Anoyed We be
of haugwis deth, ful certeynle; 3724
and therto hauen we non vytaylle
hire forto abyden, sires, saunsfaylle,
Neþer non Refrescheng we mown have
of oure frendis here vs to save; 3728
and jnto swich a day 3e graunztyn vs trewe,
but here to abyden, it wolde vs rewe.
For it were ful evel soiornenge
jn a place with-owten vytayllynge. 3732

and offer to yield up the castle

but we hym don to vndirstonde
that this castel [we] deliueren jnto his honde,
and al the lond that longeth therto,
and we of hym to holdyn it for euere mo, 3736

and pay an annual tribute.

and þerto every 3er hym forto 3elde
thrytty knyhtes with spere and schelde,
an hundryd destreres, & as many of palfray,
and an hundrid fawkowns, the sothe to say." 3740
And they acordyd alle Jn on.

The negotiators bring back this answer.

so with this answere wente þe messengeres anon,
and tolden the kyng word and ende,
of this castel how it scholde wende. 3744
and whanne the kyng herde here answere,
anon he axede of merlyne riht there
what were here-offen best forto do.

Merlin repeats his previous advice.

"3e," quod merlyne, "thow schalt not don so, 3748
For gret peryl it myhte be jn tyme comenge,
and stille jn this lond they weren dwellenge.
but j schal tellen the what thou schalt do:
anon sende a3en, with-owten mo, 3752
and bidde hem delyveren that castel,
For therto anon they scholen ben Lel,
For they ne hauen non maner of vytaylle,
J seye 3ow, Sires, with-owten faylle. 3756

3734. The pronoun is missing.

and behote ȝe hem that they scholen gon
sauf with here lyves Everychon;
And J ȝow Seye, wyth-owten Noye,
that schal ben to hem a passyng joye."
thanne the kyng aftyr Merlynes sawe
wrowht on þe morwe, whanne the day gan dawe,
Forth forto beren this answere
to hem that jn þe castel weren there.
and whan they of the castel herdyn this,
thanne maden they bothe joye and blys,
and weren cowndyed thorwgh the Lond,
and browht to the se, as j vndirstond,
and a redy Navye hem forth to lede
Jnto what lond owþer jnto what stede
that hem-selve they wolde to gon.
thus weren they exyled Everychon
onliche be the cownseyl of Merlyne,
that was holden so good a devyne.
thus was Merlyne conseillour and lord
of the kyng & his brothyr, at on word;
Tyl on an day there was to do
of thinges þat scholde come þe kyng vnto,
where-offen tweyne Barowns hadden envye,
that with the kyng he spak so prevylye,
and seiden: "sire kyng, we merveillen echon
that ȝe so beleven vppon this man.
For wete ȝe wel, sire kyng, in certeyn,
that al his werkyng of the devel cometh, pleyn.
and þerfore we wolde jn onest manere
that ȝe his compeny lefte here."
"that were me loth," quod the kyng,
"For j nolde him wraththen for non thyng."
"Sire," quod this Barown ageyn,
"j wile hym not Noyen, jn certeyn."
Now was this Barown ful of envye
and ful of vices, ful trewelye,
and to the kynges cowrt cam vppon a day,
& there thus of Merlyne gan he to say,

Messengers are sent once more,

the king's offer is accepted with joy,

and Augwis' kinsmen go into exile.

Envious barons desire the king to give up Merlin's company.

The king is not willing.

3762. MS. *onþe*.

[leaf 103 *b*]

And of hym gret Joye thus he Wrowhte,
but Evere anothir was Jn his thowhte.

One of the barons, in the presence of the king and twenty knights,

there this barown clepede to-fore the kyng
twenty knyhtes, with-owten leseng.
"Now wile ȝe sen," quod this Barown thanne,
"*Mer*lyne here, so worthy a Manne,
that tolde the kyng howh Fortagere
jn his castel scholde brenne riht þere.—

asks Merlin to foretell his death.

and therfore preye j ȝow, for charite,
of My siknesse that ȝe wolde*n* telle*n* Me,
& that ȝe welen tellen Me vtterlye
On what Mane*r* of deth that j schal dye."

Merlin, knowing the baron's bitter heart,

Thanne answerede *Mer*lyne, that knew ful wel
his Malencolyvs herte Everydel:
"ȝe han me preid that j schal Seye
to ȝow of ȝoure deth, trewelye.
knowe ȝe wel that þe same day
that deyen ȝe scholen, wit-owte*n* Nay,

says that the baron will fall off his horse and break his neck.

of an hors ȝowre Nekke schal to-breke."
Aforn alle these knyhtes thus gan he speke.
thanne seide the Barown to the kyng:
"God me defende from his talkyng!"
tho wente he hom jn-to his contre,
and there a whille dwelled he,

Later on, the baron comes to the king and feigns to be sick.

and cam aȝen thedir as þe kyng was,
and Feynede hym sore syk jn that plas,
and him forto sen he preyde the kyng,
and algates Merlyne with hym bryng,
so that *Mer*lyne ne knowe jn *Non* degre
For what Mane*r* cause thedir cometh he.

Merlin is summoned,

thanne cam *Mer*lyne to the kyng,
and axede hym what was his willyng.
"ȝe Mosten to towne gon with Me,
a sik Man j preye ȝow þere forto se."
thanne clepid the kyng his prevy Meyne

and goes to the baron.

with him to gon that Man to se.
and whanne that thedyr they weren comen Echon,

3805. *&* added in the left margin.
3813. *an*, *a* through rough correction.

thanne seide to the kyng this sik man anon :
"Sire, j preye 3ow, for charyte,
that 3owre devyne may tellen me
3yf j schal deyen of this syknesse,
oþer ellis to suffren ony more distresse."
"Sire kyng," anon quod merlyne thanne,
"of þis siknesse schal not deyen this manne."
thanne answerede the syk man, trewelye :
"now, good sire, of what siknesse schal j deye?"
"Forsothe, hangenge schalt thow ende,
and hangen þou schalt jnto thin ende."
and with that tornede him merlyn there,
and made a semblaunce as wroth he were.
thus whanne merlyne was forth gon,
this barown to the kyng seyde anon :
"Now mowen 3e knowen be his spelle,
a fool he is swyche thynges to telle,
that swyche tweyn dethes me doth devyse
whiche ben not cordyng jn non wyse!
And the thrydde tyme 3it j schal asaye :
To morwe wil j gon to on abbeye,
and that 3e wolden thider hye,
and merlyne jn 3oure compenye,
and the abbot 3ow schal seyn
that on of his monkes is Sik, certein,
and 3ow schal preyen, for charite,
thike sike monk þat 3e wolden comen se
and merlyne with 3ow forto brynge."
the kyng him grantyd his askynge.
vppon the morewen, whanne it was day,
the kyng him Rod to that abbay,
and merlyne thedyr with hym rod,
So herden they masse, and þere abod.
Atte laste cam the Abbot there,
and to the kyng seide jn this manere :
"Ha, Sire kyng, and 3owre wylle Jt be,
that an old syk monk 3e wolden com se,
and 3owre devyne with 3ow to brynge,

3832 3836 3840 3844 3848 3852 3856 3860 3864 3868

The baron wants to know if he is to die from his sickness.

"No," says Merlin,

"thou shalt hang!"

The baron points out the inconsistency of the predictions,

and says he will try the third time,

counterfeiting a sick monk.

Next morning, the king and Merlin ride to the monastery.

[leaf 103 *c*]

They are solicited to go and see the monk.

3832. *thāne*, abbreviation mark in different ink.
3849. *dethes* added above the line.

and it were 3owre wille, Sire kynge."
thanne seide the kyng to merlyne tho:
"Sire, with me wile 3e owht go?"
"3e, sire," quod Merlyne, "ful gladly!"
and took the kyng on syde jn hy:

Merlin privately reproves the king for being a party to these pretences.

"Whanne ferst j a-qweynted with 3ow bothe,
thanne non fool helden 3e me, forsothe.
what, trowen 3e that J ne knowe, sekerlye,
vppon what deth this fool schal deye?
For now sore Merveillen scholen 3e ful snelle
of a thing that j schal hym telle."
quod the kyng thanne to Merlyne:
"may it be trewe he schal have swich fyne?"
"Now, Sire," quod Merlyne, "but 3if it trewe be,
Neuere here-aftyr ne leve thow me!

He says, however, he will foretell the baron's death once more.

and 3it er that j parte from his compenye,
J shal hym tellen how that he schal dye."
So wenten they forth al jn fere,
lyk as the abbot hem ladde there.

In reply to the abbot's request,

thanne seide the abbot to the kyng:
"Sire, and j dorste preyen 3ow of on thyng:
that 3owre devyn 3ow wolde seye
3if this Monk of this Maladye schal deye."
and Merlyne answerede anon there
jn Maner as that wroth he were,

Merlin says that the man may rise, if he chooses,

and seide to the abbot vntylle:
"he may arysen, 3if that he wylle,
For siknesse here ne feleth he non,
but that he may bothe Rysen & gon.
and þerto, abbot, to the J seye
that thike day whanne he schal deye,

and that he will break his neck, hang, and drown.

his Nekke he schal breken vnto,
and an honged, and be spilt also.
Now Nedyth hym to feyne no More,
For his herte j knowe bothe here & thore."
thanne Ros hym vpe this Jlke Barown,

The baron maintains that Merlin is a fool,

and seide þere to kyng Pendragown:
"Now mown 3e knowen his folye,
that seith on swich Maner þat j scholde deye.

For this knowe j wel, that may not be
of me ne of non othir man, Sikerle.
Now devise ȝow, Sire, Ryht wel,
how ȝe this man leven ony del!"
thus thanne this werk gan to ende;
and jnto fer contre jt gan wende
how that *Mer*lyne gan to Say
on what deth he scholde dyen, jn fay.

So aftyr on a day not forthan
be-gan to Ryde this good man,
and jn his compenye gret plente
Of his owne meyne, ful sykyrle.
So atte laste he cam to a Ryver,
where as a brygge of tre was there,
and þer*v*ppon smot he his palfray,
that down on knes it fyl, jn fay.
So that he, whiche aboven was,
Fyl a-down there jn that plas,
and there his Nekke he brak vnto,
And as to the water he scholde han go,
So that his leg jn his Robe fastenyd there,
and alle his o*þer* lymes jn þe water were.
thanne were*n* there tweyne men Jn compenye,
herden how that *Mer*lyne gan seye;
Jn what Mane*r* he scholde ded be,
There they Rehersed, ful Sykerle.
thanne be-gan there an hidows cry
of alle his meyne, ful trewely;
whanne owt of the water they hadden him take,
For Sorwe they schoken & gonne to qwake.
thanne seiden they: "folys that they be
that *Mer*lyn ne leven not, Sykerle!"
they Beryeden the cors with hono*ur*.
and *Mer*lyn to the kyng kam thike same o*ur*,
and told bothen hym and to vter
how that *with* the barown it happede ther.
the kyng axede whanne it was, certeinle.
"*with*-jnne sixe dayes Messe*n*geres scholen ȝe se.
thanne kept j not to ben here,

and warns the king against him.

One day, this baron rides over a bridge.

The horse stumbles, the baron falls and breaks his neck,

his leg is entangled in his robe, the other parts of his body come into the water.

Two men relate [leaf 103 *d*] Merlin's prediction.

There is great wailing.

The corpse is buried.

Merlin informs the king.

3910. *me* added above the line.

For faste they welen of me enqwere
Merlin says he will avoid further queries, of diuers maters, what so they be,
but answere geten they non, Sikerle,
For j wyle no more so openly seye,
that the peple schal vndirstonden, jn feye."
thanne wende the kyng þat he wroth were.
and þerfore weren ful sory there.
and goes off to Blasy. So wente Merlyne to Blaysye anon,
and told him of these thynges echon,
and of opere, that to comen were;
jn this maner departyd Merlyne þere.

There dwelledè Merlyne to þe vj day,
Those present at the baron's death arrive at court. tyl they that at the deth weren, [comen], Jn fay,
and tolden the kyng how that it stood,
howhe þis barown was persched jn that flood,
Merlin's wisdom is fully acknowledged. and seiden that Merlyne was þe wysest man
that Jn al this world was lyvong than.
For of hym was neuere thyng seid ne don,
but ȝif he jnto Scripture dide it putten anon.
and thus began Merlynes prophecye
of the kynges of Engelond, certeynlye,
and of othere many thynges also.
Blasy continues his book. he dide holy Blasye it wryten tho.
thanne axede Blayse of Merlyne there:
"wryten they also jn this manere?"
"Nay, certeynly, non of hem alle,
At court, they write down but they wryten that schal befalle,
which thynges they scholen Neuere knowe,
Tyl that they be-fallen vppon a rowe."
Thanne Retornede Merlyne to cowrt ageyn,
and aȝens hym they comen, jn certeyn,
and tolden hym of that Jlke tydyng,
as thowg þere-offen he ne hadde knowen non thing.

Thanne sette on Merlyne and gan to telle
his dark prophecies. Ful dyrke worrdes of prophecyes felle,
where-offen a book they maden anon.
thanne forth to the kyng Merlyne gan gon,

3959–60. MS. *xvj*, and *weren Jn*; in the right margin: *Nota*.

and there to hem seyde he ful petowsly :
"J love 3oure bothe worschepis Badyly ;
haven 3e not now vndirstondyng
of haugwys kynnes-men Exylyng,
that owt of this lond 3e deden don dryve,
aftyr that haugwys hadde left his lyve?"
"3is, this wele knowen we, Jn certeyn ;
but for what cause do 3e this seyn?"
"J sey," quod Merlyne, "for this Enchesown,
That haugwys kynnes-men Everychon,
with-jnnen hem-Self they don thus speke,
that of haugwys deth they welen hem wreke.
So that they Maken gret congregacyown
of dyvers peple al abowtes Jn verown,
and hopen this lond forto conqwere
and Ek forto haven the victorye here."
thanne, whanne þe kyng herde this,
and also his Brothyr vter, j-wys,
Of these tydynges they Merveylled Gretle,
And axeden Of Merlyne Howh this Myhte be.
" haven they there so gret plente
Of Fensable peple Jn alle degre?"
"3e," quod Merlyne, " with-owten dowte,
they haven More peple hem abowte
thanne 3e owther 3owre brothyr, jn feye,
For a3ens on of 3owris they haven tweye ;
and but 3if 3e werkyn Ryht wysly,
3e scholen ben discomfyt & stroyed, trewely."
"we scholen werkyn aftyr 3owre wylle,
what that Evere 3e welen seyn vs vntylle."
thanne axeden they Merlyne anon there
whanne they scholden comen and jn what Manere.
" Atte the Elleveneth day, ful trewly ;
but loke that 3e kepen this prevy,
and j defende 3ow, as J now kan,
that there-offen 3e ne tellen neuere Man.
but aftyr my cownseyl that 3e don,
and sendeth aftyr alle 3oure Men anon,
and that they ben here with-owten let

Merlin pitifully informs the king

that Augwis' kinsmen

will attack the country

[leaf 104 *a*]

with superior forces,

in eleven days. This, however, is to be kept a secret.

3993. MS. *fort this.*

Merlin gives instructions with regard to the impending battle.

the laste wyke of the Mounthe of junet,
to assemblen vppon Salisbery pleyn
3owre Enemyes to withstondyn ageyn.
so that on of 3ow with half 3owre Meyne,
be-twixen hem and þe se scholen gon, Sykerle;
and so tweyne dayes 3e scholen abyde,
and on the thrydde to fyhten, what so betyde.
& 3if 3e thus wilen don, trewely,
J dar 3ow behoten the victory."

The brothers inquire if the battle will be fatal to either of them.

thanne seiden the bretheren to Merlyne there:
"Now, goode Merlyne, telle vs now here
3if ony of vs jn bataylle schal ded be."
thanne answeryd Merlyne: "ful Sykerle,
there nas Neuere thyng that hadde begynneng,
but of Necescite it Moste hauen Endyng,
Ne neuere Man owghte the deth drede,
3if he it Resceyue Jn tyme of Nede.

Merlin makes them swear, on their relics,

and therfore wolde J thanne," quod Merlyne,
"doth bryngen Me 3owre Relykes, þat ben so fyne,
and þer-vppon bothe scholen 3e swere
that 3e scholen don as j schal 3ow lere
bothen for 3owre prow and worschepe also,
and aftyr that schal j tellen 3ow Mo."
thus sworen they bothe at his Byddyng.
thanne anon seide Merlyne to the kyng:
"3e hauen sworen to Me, with-owten faylle,

to be true to God and themselves,

Trewe Men to be Jn this Bataylle
a3ens God and 3owre owne persone,
how so that Evere the game doth gone.
For to hym-Self May non Man trewe be,
but 3if to god he be trewe, Sykerle.
and that 3e confessen 3ow generally
Forto fyhten a3ens 3owre Enemy.

and promises them victory.

and aftyr mown 3e ben ful Sure
hem ouercomen bothe clene & pure,
for they beleven not on the Trenite.
And now herkene what j sey the:
Sethen holychirche cam jnto this lond,

4038. MS. *moften.* 4054. *to* added above the line.

Swich a bataylle was non, as j vndirstond,
Neþer not schal ben be owre daye.
therfore, Syker, as j 3ow saye,
on of 3ow schal deyen jn this bataylle,
as j 3ow seye with-owten Faylle.
and þerfore that Ryaly 3e 3ow araye
Forto fyhten, as j 3ow saye,
and jn worschepe of the Trenyte,
For 3owre helpe syker wile he be;
And for his love arayeth 3ow wel
To his plesawnce Everydel!"
Lo, this Was Merlynes Cownsaylle,
As j 3ow sey wit-owten faylle.
these bretheren vndirstoden ful wel his sawe,
and of his cownseyl they weren Ryht fawe.
Anon thanne senten they thorwgh al here lond
For here Retenu, J vndirstond.
and whanne they weren asembled Everychon,
Grete 3iftes hadden they thanne anon,
and preyden Eche Man Jn his degre
that Redy and arayed he wolde be,
and jn the laste wyke of Jvnet,
on þe pleyn of Salisbery, with-owten let,
Next to the cost of the se,
that be hem þe Rem defendid Myhte be.
thus dwelden bothe bretheren jn Fere,
tyl the day of Somowns were comen there,
and kepten Merlynes comandement,
that he hem bothe bad, verament.
So that atte feste of pentecost
thyder they comen with here ost,
here Ryal cowrt to holden there
Fast by the se Jn here Manere.
and Manye grete 3iftes there 3oven they
To dewk, Erl, and to Barown, trewly.
and so longe abyden they on that grownde,
Tyl þat here Enemyes a-Ryvede Jn þat stownde.
thanne sente the kyng to prelates anon,

4064 The battle, however, will be extraordinarily murderous, and one of the princes is to fall,

4068 fighting in honour of the Trinity.

4072 [leaf 104 *b*]

4076 The princes cheerfully send for their men,

4080 and ask them to be ready at the end of June, near Salisbury.

4084

4088

4092 At Pentecost they hold court there,

4096 till the enemy arrives.

4083. *of* added above the line.

that they scholde comen Everichon
Forto confessen his peple Jn fere,
that they weren clene Jn alle Manere.
The entire army is confessed — and so thorwh the ost Everychon
they weren confessed thanne anon,
and eche to oþer forȝaf þere his Maltalent,
and absolved. — and therto clene asoylled, verament.
thanne seide the kyng to Merlyne there
that tydynges he hadde of here powere,
and howh they weren aryved Echon,
alle his Enemyes, be on & be on.
thanne seide Merlyne to hym ageyn:
"that is ful trewe, jn certeyn!"
Merlin, on the king's question, repeats his former instructions, — thanne axede the kyng of Merlyne tho
Jn what Maner that he scholde do.
"ȝe scholen to Morwen senden ȝoure brothir vter
and half ȝoure Meyne to ben with hym ther.
and whanne ȝowre Enemyes ben owt of þe see,
thanne betwixen hem and þe water schal he be.
and thanne wilen they Resemblen anon
here jnto this contre forto gon.
and thus tweyne dayes schal he werken there,
adding that a dragon will appear in the air. — and þe thridde day jn the Eyr schal apere
a Red dragown, & þanne Mown ȝe fyhte
and the victorye to haven, j seye ȝow Ryhte."

The plan of operation thus settled, — To this cownseyl acordid ful wel
both pandragown an vter Everydel.
and ful gret joye bothen they Made,
and of this cownseil they weren ful glade.
thanne seide vter to Merlyne anon:
"Jnto tho partyes now wyle j gon."
"Loke that ȝe thanne ben a good knyht!"
and thus departyd they that Jlke Nyht.
Uter goes with half the army to cut off the enemy from the sea. — so that vter took forth his jorne,
and with hym half here Meyne.
so that be-twene þe see and his Enemyes he abod,
and with his Meyne thus forth he Rod.
thanne seide Merlyne: "abasche the non thyng
For deth ne bataylle, be my cownseyllyng!"

[leaf 104 c]

And Whanne that Vter herde this,
Ful Mochel his herte was Esyd, J-wys.
thanne wente *Mer*lyne Jnto North-humberlond — Merlin goes to Northumberland.
to Blaysye, his Maistyr, as J vndirstond,
and let this putten Jnto Scripture
and Many Mo thynges, J 3ow Ensure.
thanne Rod vter with his Meyne
aftyr *Mer*lynes cownseil, ful Sykerle,
and lay be-twene the Schepis & that ost,
whiche that they dredden Most.
So lay Vter Stylle Ryht there — Uter remains in his ambush for three days.
thre dayes Jn this Mañere,
and atte the Selve thrydde day — On the third day, the
the kyng Remevyd, the sothe to say, — king's force advances,
and kam So Nyhe that Meyne,
that Eche of hem Myht other se.
and whanne the ost beheld al this,
that on bothe sides they were*n* beset, j-wys,
and that to here Schipes they Myhte not gon
with-owten bataylle of here fon,
thanne jn the Eyr aperede that syht — and the dragon appears in the air.
that *Mer*lyne afore tyme hem tolde ful Ryht,
of wheche Syhte the Enemyes of the kyng
hadden gret drede, with-owte*n* lesyng.
thanne seide the kyng to his Meyne anon: — The king
" To armes and to hors let vs now gon,
and also Faste as we Mown Ryde,
vppon oure Enemyes this Jlke tyde."
and whanne that vter Say the kyng so do, — and Uter attack from
anon *with* his Meyne he remevede also, — two sides,
that so on bothe sydes beset they were.
thanne began anon strong bataylle there
and gret occisiown on bothe syde,
and mochel peple ded at that tyde.
but haugwis kynnesmen hadden the werre, — and carry the day.
Not-withstondyng they come*n* from ferre.
but of this bataylle j Reherse no More,
whiche of hem that best bar hym thore.

4172. *at that t* through correction, partly on erasure.

The king falls with many barons,
but Pandragown the kyng was there ded,
and Manye of his barowns in that sted.
thanne thus Recordith this Storye,
that vter hadde there the victorye,

but of the enemies not one escapes.
and þat of his Enemyes ne sckaped neuer on,
that ded they weren, other taken, Echon.
thus Endid the bataylle of Salisbery there,
where pandragown was slayn Jn this Manere.

Uter succeeds his brother.
thanne hadde vter the Rem Jn governaunce,
as was bothe Resown, Ryht, and chaunce.
thanne vter dide assemblen his Meyne anon,
and let beryen his dede Men Everichon,

After raising tomb-stones over the fallen,
and on Every tombe wrot the Name,
what he was, and of what fame.
but as towching his brothyr the kyng,
vppon his tombe Made he non wrytyng.
For a gret Fool he is, with-owten dowte,
that a kynges tombe ne kan knowen with-owte,
For heyere and Richere thanne ony oþer it was
that weren J-beryed Jn that plas.

he goes to Logres (London),
thanne Remevid vter to Logres anon,
and with hym his prelacye Everychon;

where he is crowned.
And there was he sacred and crowned kyng,
and of alle the Rewm hadde he the Governeng.
Thus was vter kyng of the Lond,
and alle homages Resceyvede, J vndirstond.

Merlin, coming to court,
thanne the Fyftenethe day aftyr Sewenge
cometh Merlyne to the cowrt of the kynge.
gret was the joye the kyng of hym Made,
and alle the howshold of hym was glade.

[leaf 104 d] tells Uter to adopt his brother's name, and to design a dragon like the one seen in the air,
Thanne seide Merlyne to Vter there:
"thy brotheris Name J wolde thou bere;
& benchesown of the dragown, J-wis,
that jn the Eyr aperede, with-owten Mys,
and aftyr thyke dragowns semblaunce,
J wolde thou Madist on, with-owten variaunce."
This kyng let Maken this dragown anon
of gold, also faste as it Myhte be don,
and vppon a lawnce Jt Sette, Sanȝ faylle,

4209. & added in the left margin.

with hym to be born Jn bataylle.
thus was he clepyd vter Pendragown;
his brothir and þe baner was thenchesown.·
thanne Merlyne with hym gan there dwelle,
and on a day to þe kyng gan he to spelle:
"why dost thou non more Reuerence
there thy brotheris body lyth jn precense?"
"what woldest thow, Merlyne, that j scholde do?
Sey what thow wylt, and it schal be so."
"Swich a thing to maken, thow it attende,
that Scholde abyden with-owten Ende."
"Sey me thanne," quod the kyng ageyn,
"and j wele it don, Jn certeyn."
thanne quod Merlyne: "Sende thow anon
Jnto Erlond aftyr gret ston.
and j My-Self wile thedyr pase,
to schewen where they ben and jn what place,
and tellen hem wheche that they scholen brynge
Jn thi Schepis hider, with-owten lesynge."
thus the kyng schepis thedyr sente,
and Merlyne with hem was there presente.
"Sen ȝe now these stones here?
jn ȝoure Schepis j wolde they were."
and whanne these stones they gonne beholde,
jn here hertes they Merveylled Many folde,
and seiden that Nevere schipe hem myhten bere,
Ne neuere jnto here Schipe scholde comen there.
thanne tornede they thus hom a-geyn,
and of that Merveylle tolde the kyng, ful pleyn.
Anon thanne hem answeryd the kyng:
"Abydeth here stylle tyl Merlynes comeng!"

Thanne cam Merlyne to cowrt anon,
and of this the kyng told hym thusson.
thanne made Merlyne his Surawnce
hem forto bryngen, with-owten variaunce.
and thus Merlyne thorwgh his craft,
tyl the stones weren there, he ne laft,
and leyde hem on the Sepulture

4216 to be borne with him in battle.
4220 Merlin advises the king to adorn Pendragon's tomb,
4224
for all ages,
4228
with huge stones from Ireland.
4232
Ships are sent.
4236
Merlin points out the stones,
4240
but the men find them too large,
and return home without them.
4244
4248
Then Merlin himself brings the stones.
4252

4237. MS. *Syen.*

Of pandragown, J the Enswre.
The people are surprised at the size of the stones. thanne vter Pendragown with gret Meyne
To the pleyn of Salisbery wente hem to se. 4256
and whanne they behelden this grete Mervaylle,
thanne seide the peple, with-owten Faylle,
that alle the world hem ne cowde Meve,
thowg that they scholden the sothe preve. 4260
Merlin undertakes to raise them, thanne seide Merlyne: "j schal hem dresse
Mochel bettere thanne they lyn, J-wysse."
"howh Myhte that be?" quod the kyng anone,
"that May non Man do but God alone." 4264
thanne quod Merlyne to hem anon:
sends away the people, "Goth ȝe now hennes Everychon,
and j schal hem dressen, as j have hyht,
oþer ellis my covenaunt held j not a-Ryht." 4268
and performs the task. So that Merlyne belefte there stylle,
and his covenawnt he dide fulfille.
Thanne cam Merlyne to the kyng
as to a Man þat he lovede with-owten feyneng, 4272
Merlin then says to the king, he will reveal to him a great secret. and seide: "Sire kyng, herkeneth to Me!
j Moste to ȝow discure a gret prevyte,
on the prevyest that Evere ȝe knewe,
[leaf 105 *a*] And therfore to ȝow J Wele Jt Schewe, 4276
Whiche schal ben ryht a strange thing,
as j ȝow say atte the begynneng;
and that ȝe discure me to non lyveng Man."
his axeng anon the kyng grauntid hym than. 4280
"J wele that ȝe vndirstonde me, ful pleyn:
He tells him the double source of his skill and divinatory power. Al the connenge that J have, certeyn,
onlych it cometh of the Enemy;
and therto God, that is almyhty, 4284
Wit and Memorie hath grauntid to Me
thynges that ben cómeng to knowen, certeinle;
and be that Sovereyn vertw
the Enemy hath lost, as j telle ȝow, 4288
alle the part that he hadde jn Me,
thorwh goddis wille, sire, Sykerle.
Sire, now have ȝe ful knowlechynge

4264. *do* added above the line. [4285. MS. *graũtdid.*
4274. *difcure*, *re* (?) altered from *r'*. *gret*, *g* corrected from *p*.

From whens that cometh al my konnenge.
Now j wele tellen the what Js goddis wylle,
and thow wylt herkene and lestene theretyille.
and whanne thou knowest of my menyng,
loke that thou Folwe it Jn werkyng.
Sire kyng, now vndirstonde thou me,
that god decendid from þe maieste
jn-to this erthe the Synneris to Save,
and for that he wolde here sowles have.
Also beleve wel that his sene he made
among his disciples to maken hem glade,
and þat he to hem seide Jn̄ this manere:
'on of ȝow schal betraien me þat is here.'
Also, Sire kyng, vndirstonde thou me,
that moche povert and diseise suffrede he
of the jewes, and they falsly him Slowe
aȝens the lawe, with fals witnesse j-nowe,
and vppon the croys for vs he deyde.
thanne cam a knyht, as to-foren ȝe herd seide,
and axed the body, For his ġwerdown,
of hym that for vs hadde paid rawnsom.

Merlin further relates of Christ coming to earth to save sinners,

of His supper with His disciples,

of His death,

and of Joseph, who buried His body.

Sire, aftyr that, he ros from ded
Jn scomfiture of the fowle qwed.
and happede aftyr his vp-rysyng,
this knyht with his sowdiours was walkyng
Jn a place of wast and desert,
and with hym many of his lignage, apert.
Sire, þere happede, a famyne cam hem vppon,
and to this knyht, here maister, they compleyned anon.
Anon thanne this knyht made his preyere
that god som Tokenyng wolde schewen hem þere,
the cause to suffren Swich deseise,
that he myhte it knowen, & it wolde him plese.
Anon thanne hadde he comandement
a table forto maken, verament,
jn mynde of þe table and of swete jesus,
at which he sat jn Symon lepres hows,

After the resurrection,

this Joseph travelled with his retinue in a desert,

his provisions ran short,

and he prayed to God.

He was commanded to make a table, in memory of the Lord's table,

4306. *povert*, *r* corrected from *p* rather indistinctly.
4313. In the right margin: *Nota*.

to cover it with a cloth, and place thereon the holy vessel (St. Graal)

and that table to koue*r*en (& not to lette)
with whit cloth, and þe*r*-vppo*n* þe holy vessel sette—
'and that the vessel be kouered also
with fair whit cloth, how so Euere ȝe do!' 4332

which he, when in prison, had received as a comfort from God.

whiche vessel browhte the kyng of blys
To this knyht jnto presown, j-wys,
where as he was two and fowrty ȝer,
whiche vessel al his hol comfort was ther, 4336
and be this vessel departyd he
the goode from the Evel, ful sikerle.

A void place was left at the table,

and, Sire, at this Table Evere there was
Jn Memorie of crist kept a voide plas, 4340

to signify the place once occupied by Judas.

whiche specyal place doth Signefye
the place that judas jn Sat, trewelye,
which he Forsook, whanne god hadde sayd:
'on of ȝow hath me betrayed 4344
that with me here doth drynke and Ete.'
(Jt hadde ben bettere he dydè it lete.)

[leaf 105 *b*]

So Was this place there voyde stylle,

Just as that place was afterwards filled by St. Matthew.

tyl that aftyr-ward be goddis wylle 4348
anothir, hyht Mathy, was there-jne j-set,
as to hym there Jt cam Be lot,
and to fulfille þe nombre of þe postelis twelve,
for thus wold God it scholde ben him-selve. 4352
and, Sire, this voyde place þ*a*t at þe [table] Is,
Signefieth be josep*e*, Sire, j-wis;
and lik as Maththy was chosen therto,

thus Joseph here took the empty seat.

Riht so was josep*e*, wit-owten Mo, 4356
So that these tweyne tables covenable were,
and thus pleside crist Mennes hertes there.
Sire, this peple clepede this vessel
'the Sank Ryal' o*þer* ellys 'Seint Graal.' 4360
And, sire, ȝif ȝe welen don aftyr Me,

Now the king is exhorted to make a third table.

the thrydde table, jn worschepe of þe Trenite,
ȝe scholen be-gynne, as j ȝow schal Say,
and ȝow to gret worschepe it schal torne Eche day, 4364
and to ȝou*r*e Sowle gret Mede also,
and Manye benfettes ȝow schal come*n* to,
and thorwgh this world this word schal springe,

4353. MS. þ*e* *Is.*

as j 3ow Seye with-owten lesenge." 4368
Lo, thus Spak *Mer*lyne to the kyng,
whiche wordis to hym were gret lykyng.
thanne seide the kyng to *Mer*lyne ageyn:
"J nolde for non thing, Jn certein, 4372
that god non thing ne loste be me
whiche that to his plesaunce myhte be.
wherfore, *Mer*lyne, ordeyne as thow wylt,
For vppon me ne schal not lyn the gylt." 4376
"Now," thanne quod *Mer*lyne to the kyng,
"where liketh 3ow best to ben abydyng?"
"Now certes," quod the kyng ageyn,
"where þou wilt it ordeynen, jn certeyn, 4380
and where that most plesyng it myhte be
To God, that Syt anhyghe jn maieste."
thanne answerede Merlyne, þat was ful lel:
"jn wales, atte þe town of Cardweille, 4384
and there schalt thou holden thy feste
atte pentecost bothe to mest and leste.
and forth to-foren, Sire, wyl j gon
that Table to ordeynen for 3ow echon; 4388
and also hem that there schal Sytte,
j wile hem ordeynen, that thow it wyte."

The king is much pleased,

and leaves the arrangements in Merlin's hands.

Merlin chooses the town of Cardwell in Wales; there a great feast is to be held at Pentecost.

Chap. IV.

Ryht as *Mer*lyne devisede jn alle thing,
riht so aftyr hym evene wrowht þe kyng, 4392
and there anon Sente *pro*clamaciown
be messengeris thorwgh-owt his regyown,
his ryals hym to mete*n*, bothe lest and meste,
In cardwel atte pentecost Feste; 4396
thus was the kynges proclamaciown.
And þa*n*ne from the kyng departyd *Mer*lyne anon,
and wente to ordeyne that behoven Scholde
To that Table bothe for 3ong and olde. 4400
and the woke to-Foren pentecost
Thedyr cam the kyng, as he nedis most,
and axede of Merlyne how he hadde j-do.
he seide: "Sire, riht wel 3it hyderto!" 4404
"hast thow owht ordeyned whiche schole*n* sitten here?"

Messengers are sent out.

Merlin goes in advance to the place to arrange the table.

The king follows.

"ȝe, sire, to Morwen scholen ȝe sen the Manere
Merlin promises the king an unexpected sight. and that ȝe wenden neuere forto han seye:
Fyfty worthy knyhtes, Sire, jn feye,
of the beste that ben with-jnne thi lond,
certein j do ȝow to vndyrstond.
and þerby myht thou knowen thy worthy Men,
that j have chosen be fyve sithes ten.
Also the voide place þere schalt thou se,
that ȝit fulfyld it May not be."
[leaf 105 c] Thus Merlyne at that Ryal Feste
He chooses fifty knights, ches there Fyfty knyhtes of the beste,
and places them round the table. and preide hem to Sitten al jn Fere
and there to Eten with Ryht good chere.
Ryht so they deden be on an on,
and Glad they weren Everychon.
thanne Merlyne, that was so ful of craft,
abowtes he wente, and not nelaft,
Then he calls the king, and shows him the knights and the empty seat. and clepid the kyng there forto se
how that they Seten Jn here degre,
and schewed him also the voide place
that thike tyme atte the table wase.
but what that place dide signifie,
Niste þe kyng ne non of his compenye.

And whanne Merlyne thus hadde j-don,
The king joins the party; he preyde the kyng to sitten anon.
the least is continued for a week; and thus viij dayes contenued þe feste Ryal
To lordes and ladyes and damyselis with-al;
handsome presents are given. and there ful grete ȝiftes ȝaf the kyng
bothe to lordis and to ladyes and to damyselis so ȝyng.
and whanne this feste gan vp to breke,
thanne to þe Fyfty knyhtes þe kyng gan to Reke,
and axede how hem likede there,
and of here Syttyng jn alle Manere.
The knights say they would like to stay for ever, in brotherly love. thanne they the kyng answerid ful sone:
"Jt Js owre wylle Neuere hens to Gone
Neþer Neuere to parten oure Compeny onsondyr,
For so as we loven to-gederis, it is gret wondir,

4414. *fulfyld*, *d* squeezed in afterwards.
4429. *whãne* added above the line.

For as bretheren we loven to-gederis jn fere,
and, tyl deth vs sondre, neuere to departen Ere."
And whanne the kyng herde this,
gret Merveille he hadde þer-offen, j-wys.
thanne charged the kyng to hem anon
to hym ben loveng and trewe Everychon.
thanne departyd al this compenye,
Eche Man to his own contre, trewelye.
thanne cam the kyng to Merlyne there,
and axede him thanne jn this Manere:
"Telle Me ȝif that Goddis wylle jt be
this Table fulfylled that J schal Se?"
"wyte thow wel certeyn, Sire kyng,
that jn thy tyme it schal neuere haven Endyng,
Nethyr he that jt schal fulfylle,
js not ȝit be-geten, j sey the tylle.
but jn the kynges tyme jt schal be-falle
that aftyr the schal Regnen in pured & palle;
and he that hym begeten schal,
knoweth not what aventure him schal befal.
and that same that is to be bore,
Schal fulfillen the place thore,
lyk as josepe dide jn his Manere
the Signefiaunce aftyr Maththy there.
and þerfore, Sire, j preye to the
thy festes here to holden, certeinle."
"Now certes, Merlyne," quod the kyng tho,
"and at thy wille it schal be do."
thanne seide Merlyne to the kyng:
"Sire, it is tyme to Maken a partyng;
and knowe ȝe wel now, syre kyng,
that aftyr myn hens departyng
of a long tyme ȝe schole not Me se,
J Seye ȝou, Sire kyng, ful certeinle."
thanne axede the kyng of hym aȝe
whethir at his festes he wolde not be.
thanne answerede Merlyne jn this Manere:
"Atte alle tyme j May not ben here."

The king wonders at this;

he exhorts them to be loving and true.

The king asks Merlin about the void seat.

Merlin replies: "It shall not be filled in thy time; its occupier is not yet begotten.

Continue thy feasts here!"

Merlin takes leave,

and says he will not be back for a long time.

4468. *thy*, *y* corrected from *e*; cf. l. 4604.
4473. *now* added above the line.

Merlin repairs to Blasy.

Thanne wente Merlyne to blasye anon,
and þe establementes of þe table told hym Echon
and of other thynges manye also
[leaf 105 d] That At thyke tyme Were to comen tho. 4484
and there dwelde Merlyne two 3er stylle,
that the kynges cowrt he nolde comen tylle.

In Cardwell, some courtiers murmur at the seat being left empty.

So happede it at Cardweille vppon a day
that they whiche lovede not Merlyne, gonne to say, 4488
and axeden a qwestiown of the kyng:
why that place was voyde of syttyng,
and why that som good man mihte [not] sytten there,
and thanne the table fulfilled were. 4492

The king tells them of Merlin's prediction;

thanne answeryd the kyng: "certeynle,
For a gret merveyl that Merlyne tolde me,
that it scholde Nevere ben be my day,
and thus Merlyne to me gan say. 4496
and 3it he that him Engendren schal,
Nys not 3it born, more with-al,
that this table schal fulfylle."

but they scoffingly declare, that there are as good men to be found now as ever will be,

they lawhen wel faste, as men þat weren jlle. 4500
"Sire, beleve 3e thanne that jn tyme comenge
þat better men scholen ben thanne be now reignenge,
and that jn 3owre lond [not] as goode there be
as Evere here-aftyr scholen comen, sikerle?" 4504
"Now certes, j wot Neuere," quod the kyng.

and urge the king to let them try the seat.

"No[w] we reden 3ow to putten jt jn asayeng."
"Certes," quod the kyng, "j drede me þanne sore
that Merlyne wolde ben angry there-fore." 4508
"Sire, thanne, and 3e wylen 3yven vs leve,
his Falsnesse forsothe we scholen preve."

After some hesitation,

"and j wiste Merlyne wroth wolde not be,
wel fayn wolde j asayen it, ful sykerle." 4512
"3e, Sire, 3if that Merlyne know of this,
Siker, there wile he ben, j-wys;
and þerfore suffreth vs forto asaye,
Now, goode Sire kyng, alle we 3ow praye." 4516

the king gives his consent.

So that the kyng hem graunted it forto do,
whanne that the feste cam therto.

4482. *hym*, MS. *hem*.
4491, 4503. The negation is missing. 4506. MS. *No*.

thanne weren they glad Everichon
that þe kyng hadde graunted þis thing be don.
and thus it Taryede jn-to pentecost feste,
that eche Ryal þere to be atte the kynges heste.
and Merlyne, that knew here thowhtes Echon,
Ryht there to Blayse told jt anon,
and of alle here jlle thenkenge,
and of hem þat weren þer-offen þe begynnenge.
and he wiste wel that provyd jt scholde be,
that jlke place, ful certeynle;
and sethen algates it scholde þen so,
bettere on a schrewe thanne on a good Man to proven it tho.
and thus Merlyne dwelled þere stylle
jnto qwynȝyme of pentecost, here wil to fulfille.

Merlin knows of the courtiers' intentions,

but does nothing to prevent them.

Thanne the kyng to Cardweille wente,
and with hym Many lordis, veramente.
and they that comen to asayen this place,
Seiden there was fallen a wondyr case:
that a fals wood cherl, jn certayn,
Jn a wode goode Merlyne hadde slayn.
and thus so styfly they gonnen it say,
that the kyng belevyd it that day,
and More principaly the More for on thing:
be Encheson of Merlynes longe abydyng;
and also More thanne Supposed the kynge
þat he wolde it not were asayed, Merlyne levynge.

A rumour is spread that Merlin has been slain.

The king believes it, particularly as Merlin does not appear.

thanne vppon the Even of pentecost
there was þe semblance, as Nedes Most.
thanne axede the kyng of hem anon
ho that place asayen scholde don.
thanne he that the place assaien wolde,
Seide þere to the kyng with wordis bolde:
"Sire, j have begonnen this jlke thing,
and non but j ne schal have the asayeng."
Thanne cam he to the table anon

On the eve of Pentecost,

the courtier appointed

goes to the table.

4531. *dwelled*, *w* corrected from *e*.

4544. After this line there follows, written up the margin: *for to þ^e^ peple it ſcholde ben agroſche*(?). The end is daubed and indistinct.

[leaf 106 *a*] There the fyfty knyhtes Seten Echon.
"J am comen forto Sitten here
Forto beren ȝow compenye al jn fere." 4556
The intruder is met with silence. and they to hym Seiden neuer a word,
but humblely stille seten at that bord,
and behelden what that he wolde do,
and so dyde the kyng and manyon mo. 4560
He has scarcely taken the seat, thanne thussone he hym sette adown
amonges al that peple there jn virown.
and assone as he was set jn that sted,
when he sinks down lifeless he Sank a-down lik a plom of led. 4564
Ne non man wyste how it cam to,
Neþer why he Suffrede that deth ful wo,
and disappears. Ne where his body becomen was,
there wiste no man jn that plas. 4568
thanne comanded the kyng anon
To thyke worthy men everychon
All rise. that anon they scholden vp ryse,
and so they dyden jn hasty wyse, 4572
and merveillously astoned this cowrt thanne was,
and also the kyng most jn that plas.
thus thanne taryede there the kyng
A fortnight later, tyl Fyftene dayes aftyr, with-owten leseng. 4576
Merlin comes to court. and be that tyme merlyne to cowrt was gon,
Of hos comenge weren glad manyon,
and specyaly aboven alle othere the kyng,
that aȝens merlyne wente jn metyng. 4580
Anon as merlyne the kyng gan beholde,
these same wordis to hym he tolde:
He reproves the king. "certeyn, ȝe haven ryht evele j-do
ony man jn þat place to suffren sitten so!" 4584
"Now sikerly, merlyne," quod the kyng,
The king excuses himself. "they jt deden and me begyleng."
"certis," quod merlyne to the kyng than,
"ryht so it fareth be manye a man. 4588
ho that often desireth to be-gylen anothyr,
atte laste on him-self falleth the fothyr.
and that, Sire kyng, myht thou proven here
vppon this man jn alle manere." 4592
thanne aftyrward preide the kyng merlyne,

that was his owne and worthy devyn,
where that Man were, and how be hym it felle,
he preide that Merlyne hym wolde telle.
thanne answerede Merlyne to him Ryht there:
"what Nedeth the aftyr hym Enqwere?
For thowh thou wistest howh with hym it stood,
Jt scholde don the but litel good.
but thenke on hem that there don Sytte,
and how that thow schalt wel Meynteyne jtte
and othir thynges that belongen to the,
thy cowrt, thy festes, and thy Meyne,
that thou hast begonnen jn this town.
Now myht þou se, the table js of Renown,
of Renown and of dignete Gret;
here sixt þou proved, and thow wilt wet.
Now, sire kyng, from the wyl j gon,
loke thou kepe wel these thynges Echon,
and that thow do aftyr Myn cownsaille,
for j suppose it wyle the somwhat avaylle."

The king asks Merlin what has become of the dead courtier.

Merlin gives him no satisfaction on this point;

he tells him rather to mind his people and his feasts,

and follow Merlin's instructions.

Thus departyd Merlyne from the kyng tho,
and jnto othir contres gan forto go.
thanne the kyng, where he scholde holden his feste,
Faire howses let he Maken aftyr his heste.
Thanne dede proclame the kyng anon
alle these festes, Everichon,
that Eche Man at Cardwel scholde be
atte these festes as ȝe scholen se:
that is, at the feste of cristemasse,
Esterne, & pentecost, as j gesse,
and þe feste of alle halwen also,
To Cardweylle they scholde comen to.

Merlin departs.

The king erects fine buildings at Cardwell,

and appoints general festivals to be held there regularly

at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and All Saints' Day.

[leaf 106 *b*]

so that jt happede atte a cristemasse feste,
the kyng Somownd his barowns, bothe lest & Meste,
and warned hem Jn this Manere,
that Eche lady with hire lord scholde ben there,
here dowhtres, here Sostren, here Neceȝ also,
to Cardweille jn Gales scholden alle go,

One Christmas, the ladies are also invited to the feast.

4599. *thou*, MS. *the*.

and also bothe knyhtes and bachelere,
jn alle wises they scholden ben there.

Amongst others, Jt were to longe here Names to telle,
but of certeyn persones j schal ȝow spelle.

there appear the duke of Tyndagel and his wife Ygwern. there was the dewk of tyndagel
and ygwerne, his wyf, that he loved ful wel,
where-offen spekyth this storye,
and a-forn oþere putteth it jn Memorye.

The king at once falls in love with Ygwern. Anon the kyng his love there sette
(Myht no Man womman loven bette),
and cow[n]tenance to hire Made he non,
but hire beheld Most of Echon.

She notices it, so atte laste sche gan aspye
that the kyng hire lovede prevylye,
as sche gan aspyen be his chere.

and avoids him. and þerfore sche schoned aforn him to comen there,
For sche was bothe good and fayr, trewly,
and loved God and hire lord Sovereynly.

The king distributes costly presents; and the kyng, for love of this lady fre,
ȝiftes abowtes sente, ful gret plente
of jewelys and Many oþer preciows thynges,
Nowches, and broches, and Manye Riche Rynges.

to Ygwern he sends a precious jewel, and to Ygwerne he sente a precyows jwel,
that he supposede scholde plesen here wel.
and sche sawh that to alle other ladyes he sente,

which she dare not refuse. So dorste sche not Refwsen his presente.
and in hire herte this lady gan to Remene
that for hire love he dyde jt ful clene,
and that sche scholde his ȝifte Receyve,
that from his love sche scholde not weyve.

Thus the kyng there held his Festis
with Ryalte, Mynstrales, and Many gestis.
and algates he was with-owten wyf,
and thus jn love Morneng he ledde his lyf.

The enamoured prince, For so was he set jn love of ygwerne,
that from loves dart non Man myht hym werne.

4641. MS. *cowtenance.* 4648. *hir'* corrected from *his.*
4653. MS. *yGwerne,* G corrected from *w.*
4666. *lovef, f* inserted afterwards.

thus thanne vp Brak this Ryal feste,
and þere the kyng preide both lest & meste
that at Cardweille they scholden alle be
atte the feste of Esterne, jn that cyte,
and also alle the ladyes there Everychon;
thanne they hym grauȝnted Ryht anon.
and whanne the dewk of tyndagel departed thenne,
the kyng hym conveyed with manye of his menne,
and hym dide bothe worschepe and honour,
& ek to that lady that jn his Eye was flowr.
and so of hem his leve there he took,
(but Evere for love his herte sore qwook),
and torned aȝen, with-owten fable,
To the fyfty knyhtes of his Rownde table,
and axede hem leve, and wente his way,
and betawht hem god and many good day.
that so wente he forth Jn his jorne,
tyl the Feste of Esterne cam aȝe.

So that at the feste of pask anon thanne
at cardweille assembled manye a manne;
of ladyes, of damyseles, and other meyne
J wot there was Ful gret plente.
and mochel joye there-offe made þe kyng,
whanne þat he say thike fayre assemblyng.
and at the feste he wolde not werne,
but the dewk hym to-forn and his wyf ygwerne.
So that be His ȝyftes and His Entent,
sche wyste he hire lovede, verament.
so in gret thowht was that lady fre,
but al sche suffrede, as Nedis it moste be.
and thus with gret ioie contenwed this feste
to alle tho Ryales, bothe lest and meste.
and whanne this feste was j-do,
Eche lord took his leve hom to go.
and the kyng hem preide ouer alle thyng
to comen aȝen at his Sendyng.
and they grauntyd hym Everichon
that his comandement scholde be don.

at the end of the feast, orders all to come back by Easter;

he sees the duke and duchess off with great honour,

and takes leave of the knights of the Round Table.

At Easter, all meet again;

and the king shows his love as before.

[leaf 106 c]

At the break-up, he requests them to return at his summons.

4697. *ioie* added above the line.

thus departyd this cowrt thanne,
and the kyng there lefte an hevy Manne.
The king spends a year in yearning. so al that 3er jn angwysch lyved he
for Ygwernes love, ful syker 3e be. 4708
and whanne it cam to thende of the 3ere,
he compleyned hym of his angwysch þere,
that certeyn, for the love of ygwerne,
No Man to Morne ne myhte hym werne. 4712
His privy council advise him thanne answerid his prevy cownseyl ageyn :
"what wil 3e þat we do, telle vs now pleyn!"
"j wyle that 3e wolden Me Rede
how that of hire J Myhte spede." 4716
thanne seiden they to the kyng anon :
not to go into Ygwern's country, "3if 3e owht jnto that contre gon,
anon discured scholen 3e be,
and þat were non worschepe to 3ow, Sykerle." 4720
"cownseilleth Me thanne what j schal do!"
and they to the kyng thus answerede vnto :
"the beste cownseyl Js, that we can,
but to have a feast again at Cardweil, that 3e don Somowne Every Man 4724
to ben at cardweille atte 3owre feste,
and here ladyes, bothe lest and Meste,
and that xv dayes it schal laste,
that eche schal abyde, tyl that be paste, 4728
and so with-jnne thike xv dayes
and there enjoy Ygwern's society. with ygwerne Mown 3e haven bothe dalyaunce & playes."
this cownseille plesid ful wel the kyng,
and he dyde aftyr here cownseilleng. 4732
So thanne sente the kyng Messengeris anon
To alle his Barowns thanne, Everychon,
At Pentecost, the nobility assemble, at Pentecost at cardweille forto be,
Eche Barown and his lady so fre. 4736
So comen they thedyr Everychon
the kynges comaundement forto don.
and the king bears his crown throughout the feast. At that Feste the kyng Bar corowne
jn chirche, jn paleys, jn feld and towne. 4740
and grete 3iftes 3af the kyng, certeinle,
bothe to lordis and ladyes, aftyr here degre.

4707. *lyved*, *y* corrected from *e*.
4713. *cownseyl*, *l* squeezed in afterwards.

At that Feste ful joyful was the kyng,
whanne that he Sawh that Fayre assemblyng.
So that he clepede on of his olde cownseiller,
that ful mochel he trusted jn ther,
hos name vlphyn thanne was,
that the kyng clepede jn that plas,
and axede of hym how that he scholde do
for Ygwernes love, that wrowht hym wo—
"that nethyr Sleping ne wakyng non reste, certeyne!
So that hire love doth me distreyne,
and but j haue the bettere cownsaille,
j am Siker to deyen, *with*-owten faylle."
thanne spak vlphyn, and lette for non schame:
"Now Sekerly, Sire, ȝe ben to blame,
that for a wo*m*mans love wenen to deye!
and it were to me ward, Sire, be my feye,
as pore man as J am here on,
and j lovede so as ȝe now don,
j wolde neu*er*e deyen for hire Sake,
but som othir menes thanne wolde j make,
owthyr w*ith* faire speche or ȝiftes grete,
With dalyau*n*ce, and With love hyre threte,
and to hem that ben hire abowte
gret ȝiftes to ȝyven, al that nowte.
and aȝens this man*er* of werkyng
herde j neu*er*e wo*m*mans cownterpletyng.
and thou thy-self that art a kyng,
wherto makyst thou al this morneng?"
thanne spak the kyng to vlphyn ageyn:
"thou seist wondirly wel, jn certeyn,
and therto thow knowest what longeth þ*er*to
Swich maner of werkynge forto do.
and þ*er*fore, vlphyn, J the preye,
helpe what þou canst be ony weye,
and to my cofres thou go anon,
& ches what jewelis þou wilt am*onges* hem echon,
and ȝeve to hem that ben hire abowtes there,
of hire that j myhte haven the better chere."
"Now resteth, Sire," quod vlphyn tho,
"and al my deligence j wele now do."

The king asks the advice of his confidant, Ulfin (cf. l. 3709),

with regard to his love-affair.

Ulfin encourages the king,

recommending fair words [leaf 106*d*] and great presents,

which no woman can resist.

The king charges Ulfin to distribute jewels.

thus vndirtook Sire vlphynes there
to helpen the kyng aftyr his powere.
The king lives in joy and bounty. thanne was the kyng joyful jn þat stede,
For wel he hopede that vlphyn scholde spede.
and so that alle thike xv dayes
the kyng made gret joye and many playes,
and algates the dewk jn his compenye,
and many grete jewelis 3af he, Sekerlye.
Ulfin brings Ygwern many a costly jewel. thanne jn this mene whille also
vlphyn to ygwerne spak vnto,
and manye a riche jewel he hire browhte,
whiche þat hire best scholde plesen him thowhte.
The lady refuses the gifts, but ygwerne resceyvede non of al this,
For why he it dede, wel thowhte sche, j-wys.
so that jt happede vppon a day
that ygwerne to vlphyn thus gan say:
and remonstrates. "sey, vlphyn, what Js the cause and why
Swiche 3iftes me to profren so prevyly?"
Ulfin praises her high qualities, "Lady, for 3owre bewte and 3owre semblance,
For 3owre discresciown and good dalyawnce,
For 3owre hyghe wyt and 3owre bownte,
alle these Londis goodis, 3owre they be,
and alle mennes persones to 3ow scholen obeye
as to here owne Sovereyn lady, Sekerlye."
"how myhte this be," quod Ygwerne thanne,
"that to me scholde obeye so manye a manne?"
and tells her that she possesses the king's heart. "For his herte haven 3e al only
to whom alle men scholen obeien lowly."
"O Lord god, ho may that be?
j preye the, vlphyn, telle þou now me!"
"the kynges herte," seide vlphyn than.
Ygwern condemns the king. Anon to blessen sche hire be-gan,
and seyde: "how longe hath the kyng a tretour be,
that my lord So worschepith to-forn me,
and me wolde don so fowl a schame,
and þerto bryngen me jnto endeles blame?
Therfore, sire vlphyn, j warne the,

4784. *hif*, *f* through correction.
4809. *al* added above the line.
4813. *than*, *a* rendered distincter afterwards.

that neuere more swich wordis þou speke to me.
and ȝif thow it evere do, jn certeyn,
j schal jt tellen my lord, ful pleyn.
And ȝif there-offen he knowe, trewlye,
Ful Syker thou be that thow schalt deye!"
thanne answerede Sire vlphyn ageyn:
"that were non resown, jn certeyn,
that j so for my lord Scholde now deye.
Now ȝe ben to blamen, ful trewelye,
that ȝe refusen so ryal a thyng,
to haven bothe the love and þe herte of a kyng,
that so ȝow loveth aboven alle erthly creature,
So whethir to lyven oþer deyen he not, j ȝow enswre,
but lyveth jn hope as a woful manne."
"ȝe gabben," quod Ygwerne to vlphyn thanne.
"Nay, but that ȝe wele now mercy have
Vppon ȝowre Kyng, And ȝowre-self to save.
and but ȝe don as j ȝow here say,
gret deseise may fallen with-jnne schort day.
For Nethyr ȝowre lord ne ȝe ne mowen non thyng
withstonden aȝens the wylle of the kyng."
thanne seide Ygwerne and answered ageyn,
Ful sore wepynge thanne, jn certeyn:
"ȝif j mowe, j schal me defende,
j schal him Neuere sen, thowh he for me sende!"

Ygwern threatens to tell her husband.

Ulfin perseveres,

emphasizing the king's love and longing,

[leaf 107 a]

and the danger and uselessness of resistance.

Ygwern weepingly says she will defend herself.

Thus departyd they thanne anon,
and Sire vlphyn to the kyng is gon,
and tolde the kyng every word thanne.
þe kyng seide: "sche answerede as a good wommanne!
Neuertheles, vlphyn, ȝit not thow leve,
For a good womman hire-self wyle preve
and not so sone ouercomen to be;
ȝit forto assayen j preye to the."
So it happede that on the xj day
aftyr pentecost, as j ȝow say,
the kyng at his mete sat ful lel,
and with hym the dewk of tyndagel.

Ulfin tells the king,

who commends the lady's virtue.

Some time after, the king sits at table with the duke.

4853. *the*, *h* corrected from *e*.

a ful Riche cowpe stood to-fore the kyng,
Ulfin kneeling before the king, suggests that he should send a gold cup to Ygwern. and vlphyn, that was to-forn him knelyng:
"Syre, take ȝe this cuppe & sende Ygwerne,
and for ȝowre loue to drynken let hire not werne. 4860
preye ȝe the dewk jt Myhte so be,
and as hire owne stille it to kepen for the."
The king speaks to the duke, thanne to this dewk spak the kyng,
and him preyde to fulfillen his askyng, 4864
that he wolde that cowpe to ygwerne sende—
"and for my love to drynken, and me hauen jn Mende;
and that sche the cowpe kepe now stylle,
to don ther-with at hire owne wylle." 4868
who unsuspectingly and gratefully tells his confidant Bretel thanne answerede that worthy Manne,
that non Maner of Evel thowhte he thanne,
and clepyd a knyht, that him stood besyde,
that with hym was prevy jn Eche tyde: 4872
to take the cup to Ygwern. "Tak ȝe this cowpe here Ryht anon,
and to ȝowre lady there-with ȝe gon,
and seyth to hire on this Manere,
that sche here-offen drynke with ryht good chere, 4876
hertylich for love of the kyng,
and the cowpe to kepen to hire weldyng."
Bretel goes, This knyht Bretel wyth þe cowpe wente ful soſte,
and the dewk the kyng there-offen thankyde ofte. 4880
Forth this Bretel to chambre gan gon,
There as these ladyes Eten Everychon,
and delivers the duke's message. and toforn his lady he knelyd a-down,
as to a worthy lady of Renown. 4884
"Lady, this cowpe ȝow sendeth the kyng,
and my Lord ȝow comandeth ouer alle thing
For the kynges love to drynken with good chere,
and stille þe cowpe to kepen jn fair Manere." 4888

Ygwern grows red for shame, but drinks out of the cup. Whanne this lady these wordis herde,
ful Red sche wax, and aschamed sche ferde,
and dorste not Refusen hire lordis byddyng, 4891
and drank of this cowpe, and wolde han sent it the kyng.
thanne seide Bretel to that lady fre:

4860. *loue* added afterwards above the line.
4879. *wyth*, *y* corrected from *e*.

" ſtille it to kepen my lord comanded the,
and ſo the kyng hym faire preide,
þerfore doth ȝe as j have ȝow seyde!"
thanne say this lady þat for good ne ylle
but that thike cowpe sche moste kepen stylle.
and Bretel aȝen to halle was goeng,
and on Ygwernes be-halve thankyd þe kyng,
Not-withstondyng sche seide non word
To Bretel, whiles sche sat atte bord.
Ful mochel joye made the kyng tho,
that ygwerne his cowpe resceyved so.

thanne vlphyn anon to chambre þe weye gon take,
To sen what semblaunce Ygwerne dide make.
And þere He Fond Hyre jn pensyſnesse,
angry of chere, and ful of hevynesse.
and whanne the tables j-drawen were,
anon cleped sche vlphyn to hire there,
and Seide: " be tresown thy lord the kyng
me a cowpe hath sent, aȝens my willyng,
but lytel wynnenge to hym schal jt be,
For my lord j wele it tellen, Sykerle,
what tresown that the kyng and ȝe
han purchased aȝens my lord & me!"
thanne answerid here vlphyn ageyn:
" beth wel war what ȝe don Seyn!"
thanne answerede this lady fre:
" blame haue he þat spare for hym oþer the
that j ne schal tellen, every word,
the tresown of the and of thy lord!"

Thens vlphynes departyd, and cam to halle,
There as weren these lordis alle.
the kyng hadde whaschen and þe bord j-drawe,
and jn herte was the kyng bothen joyful and fawe,
and took the dewk be the hond anon:
" Sire, jnto chambre now lete vs gon
and sen the chere of these ladyes gent."
" J graunte," quod the dewk, " Sire, verament."
thanne wente the kyng & þe dewk anon,
there as Ygwerne et, þei comen thussone.
thanne wiste ygwerne ful witterly

Ygwern is requested to keep the cup.

Bretel returns to the king and thanks him on Ygwern's behalf although she has said nothing.

The king is delighted.

Ulfin goes to see Ygwern, whom he finds angry [leaf 107 *b*] and sad.

She complains of treason, and declares she will inform her husband.

Ulfin tells her to beware,

but cannot deter her.

The king, after his meal, goes with the duke to the ladies' room.

Ygwern knows it is for her sake.
that for here jt was only.
so this sche suffrede al that day
with sorweful herte and sore afray.

At night, Ygwern retires, weepingly, to her lodgings.
So that at Nyht to hire ostel sche wente
with hevy chere and wepyng, veramente.
and whanne the dewk Sawh hire of that chere,
he axede hire what that hire Eylede there,
and Embracede hire jn his armes two,
and axede hire what the cawse was tho.

She tells her husband
"Forsothe to 3ow no*n* thing wyl j hele,
but j schal tellen 3ow Everydele
as to my lord that j love Most of alle thing
aboven alle Creatures jn Erthe leveng.

of the king's love,
here js the kyng, My lord and 3owre,
he loveth Me with gret dishono*ure*.
For alle these Cowrtes, and this feste,
and þe sonde of these ladyes, bothe lest and Meste,
js not for non thing but only for Me,
that j with 3ow scholde come*n*, Sykerle.

his many presents,
thus Many 3iftes he hath Me sente,
and j Non Resceyved, verament.
and thus be bretel 3e sente Me to say

the ruse with the cup,
the Cowpe þ*at* j scholde Resceyve this day,
and that for his love drynken J scholde,
and aftyr to kepen the cuppe of goolde,
that Syker j hadde as leef ded forto haue be
as jt han Resceyved so, Sykerle.

and her constant annoyance.
and what for hym and fore vlphyn
j May non Reste haven, sou*e*reyn Myn!"
"Tha*n*ne se j be 3oure wordis here,
w*ith*-owte*n* velonye to remeve, a Maistrye it were."

She begs to be taken home to Tyndagel.
"3e, worthy sovereyn, j preye to the
To tyndagel that 3e wolde*n* leden Me,
and jn this place no*n* lengere abyden here,
but jn owre owne lordschepe þ*at* we were!"

The irate duke sends for his men,
and whanne the dewk herde al this,
ano*n* ful wroth he was, j-wys,
and sente aftyr his knyhtes faste,
that to hym they scholde come*n* jn haste.
and whanne to hym they were come*n* Echon,

To hem thanne seide the dewk anon :
"Retorne 3ow faste forto Ryde,
and þat non Man þere-offen wyte this tyde,
Neþer axeth not of Me the cawse why,
for j schal 3ow it tellen ful pleynly."
thus the dewk with his Meyne
jnto his contre ladde his lady fre.

gives orders for a sudden and secret departure,

and returns to his own country.

Vppon the Morewen, Whanne Jt Was day,
Whanne the kyng Wyste of this affray,
how that the dewk thus was agon,
the dwchesse, and thê Meyne Echon,
he sente aftyr his cownseyl jn hye,
and told hem of this velenye,
also of the spyt he hadde hym j-don,
to hym and to alle his Baronye Echon ;
where-offen merveillede al that Feste
that there beleften, bothe lest and Meste.
thus Spoken they alle of this clause,
but lytel wisten they what was his cause.
"j take witnesse," quod the kyng, "of 3ow in fere
that More worschepe J dede hym here
thanne to ony oþer j dede at þe feste present."
and that wisten they alle wel, verament.
"and 3ow like," quod the kyng,
"j schal him sende Newe tydyng,
that he come and amendis Make
of that he hath a3ens Me take,
and that jn the same degre he hennes wente,
that he a3en come with good Entente."
and herto acorded his cownsaille,
3if that it Myhte ony thyng avaylle.
and on the kynges behalve, verament,
tweyne worthy men weren there sent,
and comen streyht Rydynge to Tyndagel.
the dewk they fownden & his Meyne Eche del,
and seiden as they were charged of the kyng,
and of the dewk they abyden here answeryng.

[leaf 107 *c*] Next morning, the king receives the news.

He calls in his council, relates what has happened

reminds them of the honour he has always shown the duke,

and says he should like to send orders for him to return with the same company with which he left.

Two messengers are sent to Tyndagel.

4980. *Contre*, *C* corrected from *l*.
5009. *wer'*, *r'* through correction.

Whanne the dewk vndirstood al this,
that Nedis he Moste a3en comen, j-wis,
jn the same degre that he was there,
thanne moste with hym gon ygwerne, his fere,
and that wolde he for non Maner of thyng,
The duke refuses to return to the court. and Ryht so sente he to seyne to the kyng,
and seide: "to cowrt j wele not Gon
amongis hem that ben My fon!"
thus thanne wente þe Messengeris ageyn,
and the answere tolde the kyng, ful pleyn.

thanne, whanne these Messengeris weren agon,
The duke sends for his counsellors, and tells them the cause of his sudden departure. þe dewk aftyr his cownseille thanne sente anon,
and tolde hem the cause ful pleynly,
the cause of his comeng so hastely,
and what schame the kyng gan hym purchase,
that cawsed hym to voyden owt of þat plase.
and whanne they herden his pleyneng,
They promise him their help. they 3oven the dewk good comfortyng,
and seiden: "he þat schame to his lige wyle purchase,
on hym May be-happen the same grace!"
Thanne preyde hem the dewk anon
hem of helpe and socour Everichon,
and his lond helpen to defende,
3if þe kyng on hym ony werre wolde sende.
so that him they grawntyd, with-owten stryf,
To lesen bothe here hedes and lyf.

When the king's messengers return with the duke's reply, whanne þe Messengeris to Cordwel were comen jn fere,
The kyng they fownden and þe barowns there.
and word for word they tolden the kyng
what Maner was þe dewkis answeryng.

the barons are surprised. thanne seiden þe barowns that weren there,
they Merveilled Mochel of his answere,
For they helden hym a ful wys Man,
what that so Evere Eylede hym than.

The king asks them to assist him. thanne preide the kyng his barowns anon
hym helpen to avengen of his fon
and of the dispyt he hath him do—
"and My feste thus distorbled so."
Thanne answerede these barowns ageyn,
[leaf 107 *d*] And preyden the Kyng alle, Ful pleyn,

of fowrty dayes to ȝeven hym warneng;
and the kyng hem grauntyd here askyng.
thanne sente the kyng messengeris ful Lel
to the dewk of tyndagel,
and seide, atte the fowrtythe day
he wolde him visite, ȝif he may.
and þerto he preide his barowns echon
redy to ben with hym thedyr to gon.
and whanne the dewk herde this tydyng,
the dewk hym purveyed jn alle thing,
and abowtes sente faste to his meyne
hym helpen forto socoure jn that degre.
and they senten answere aȝen there,
they wolden jt don to here powere.
thanne seide the dewk to his cownseylle,
he ne hadde but twey castelis þat myhte avaylle—
" whiche nethir of thike two
he schal neuere wynne, what he kan do.
þerfore jn tyndagel j schal leven Ygwerne,
and ten knyhtes hire forto governe,
the wheche of non assawt ȝyven cure
of non man lyvenge, J ȝow enswre.
and to the tothyr j wele go,
þere to defenden me fro my fo,
For of non assawt j ne rekke,
thowh he aȝens me ordeyne neuer so wykke!"
and that castel ful strong he gan to make
al only for the kynges Sake.
thanne to þe kyng comen þe messengeres ageyn,
and tolden þe answere to þe kyng, ful pleyn,
that he wolde defenden hym to his myht,
as he was trewe an a gentyl knyht.
thanne sente the kyng aftyr his barown
thorwh-owt al his regiown,
and made hem to semblen al jn fere
atte the entre of the dewkis lond þere,
beside a ryver jn a fair mede;
the barowns þere semblede jn þat stede.
and whanne they weren assembled euerichon,
the kyng rehersed the dispyt anon

5052 5056 5060 5064 5068 5072 5076 5080 5084 5088

Word is sent to the duke that the king will visit him on the fortieth day.

The duke gathers provisions,

is promised help by his men,

leaves Ygwern in Tyndagel,

and goes himself to the other strong castle that he possesses.

The king is told of the duke's resolute behaviour.

He summons his barons to meet on the border,

and puts the case before them.

that the dewk dyde jn his plas,
at his feste there he was. 5092

The king invades the duke's land.
and thus ENtred þe kyng with his MEyne
jnto þe dewkis lond, ful Sykerle,
and there sesede he al his lond,
as J do ȝow NOw forto vndirstond. 5096

He hears about the two castles.
thanne was Jt told to the kyng
that jn tyndagel, with-owten lesyng,
that þere-jnne was Ygwerne þat dewchesse
Jn strong hold and jn distresse, 5100
and the dewk jn a-NOthyr castel was,
that was not allynges so strong a plas.
thanne axede the kyng anon cownsaille,
whiche castel he scholde ferst assaylle. 5104
thanne cownseille they ȝoven hym EVerichon

and resolves to try to take the duke's castle first.
that ferst to the dewkys he scholde gon.
and þerto the kyng grauntyd as faste,
and to that castel anon RYden they jn haste. 5108
thanne spak the kyng to vlphyn tho,
and axede hym there what he scholde do.
"but ȝif that j MYhte Sen ygwerne,
of sore MOrneng kan non MAn me werne." 5112

Ulfin exhorts him to be patient in the meantime.
thanne seide vlphyn to hym ageyne:
"ȝit a while ȝe MOsten Suffren peyne;
for a thing þat MAy not ȝit be,
to the ENde moste ben suffred, parde!" 5116

[leaf 108 *a*]
Longe lay the kyng At this Castel,

The castle, however, cannot be taken, and the king frets.
but hit avayllede hym NEvere a del,
So that he was Jn his gret MOrneng,
for to that castel he MYhte don non thing, 5120
and alther MOst for love of the dewchesse,
whiche browhte his herte jn gret distresse

One day, he is seen weeping in his tent.
So that vppon a day, as jt fyl thore,
jn his pavylown he wepte ful sore. 5124
and his MEyne gonnen it to aspye,
and thens they wenten ful prevylye.

5096. *Now*, N through correction.
5109. *thāne*, the *n*-mark and the top part of *e* in blacker ink.
5119. *gret* added above the line. 5120. MS. *forto*

thanne cam vlphyn and that aspyde,
and jn to hym goth at that Tyde.
Anon whanne he him say wepen thore,
hit hym ouerthowhte wondyrly sore,
and he axede the kyng why he wepte tho.
"what nede is to the to askyn ME so?
For weten ȝe wel that j schal deye
for ygwernes love, certeynlye,
and that is now my destyne,
For bothen mete and drynk js benomen ME,
and al kende RESTE is bereft me fro,
that good oþer ESE ony man Scholde do."
whanne that vlphyn herde al this:
"of Feble herte ȝe ben, j-wys,
For a wommans love that ȝe scholen deye.
let be, for schame, and nowht so seye!
but wylen ȝe aftyr MY cownseylle wende,
anon aftyr Merlyne that ȝe sende,
where that EVERE he MOWE be fownde,
that he to ȝow come with-jnne a stownde.
for he kan ȝeven ȝow ful good cownseylle,
that to ȝowre herte it schal wel avaylle.
and grauntyth hym, so god ȝow save,
For his labour what he wyle haue!
For he kan Jt RIHT ful wel do,
and non MAN but he, j seye ȝow so."
thanne quod the kyng: "that wot j wel,
he is ful konneng EVERYDEL,
and j wot wel he knoweth al MY distresse;
but that he be wroth with this, j gesse,
For the place at the table assayed was
at cardweille, jn that RYAL plas;
and so then it is now longes ago
that he to ME ne cam not to.
and j trowe it ouerthenketh him thore
that MY liges wif j loue so sore.
but Sertes, j ne MAY non other do,
whethir it torne me to wele oþer wo.

Ulfin goes to the king, and asks him why he weeps.

The king says that Ulfin knows the reason well.

Ulfin, after censuring the king for his weakness,

advises him to send for Merlin,

and to give him anything he shall demand for his help.

The king fears that Merlin is angry on account of the attempt to fill the vacant seat,

and on account of the king's unlawful love.

5131. MS. *axekc*.

and j wot wel he wil me telle myn entent,
that this was þe cause J fore hym sent."
Ulfin hopes that Merlin will soon arrive.
"of on thing," quod vlphin, "J schal 3ow telle:
he is heyl and sownd jn flesch and felle.
and 3if he 3ow love as 3e suppose he do,
he wyl non while now ben 3ow fro,
3if that he knowe 3owre distresse
owther ony part of 3oure hevynesse;
that sone tydynges scholen 3e here
of hym, and þerfore be of ryht good chere!"

Ulfin asks the king to cease fretting, and be merry with his men.
Thus comforted sire vlphyn the kyng,
and bad hym to beleven his morneng,
and þere to senden aftyr his men,
and to hem gret joye to make than;
his peyne so scholde he thanne forȝete,
and solace and mirthe there to hym gete.
the kyng hym seide, he wolde so do—
"but my love may j not forȝeten so."
Renewed attacks prove fruitless.
thanne thus the castel the kyng gan assaile,
but lytel oþer nowht jt dede hym avaylle.

One day, Ulfin rides out, and meets a [leaf 108 b] seemly old man,
Jt happede vppon a day that vlphyn rod
thorwh-owt þe ost, and not abod,
And mette there With a semly man,
that this Sire vlphyn knew not than.
thanne seide this good man to vlphyn tho:
who desires to speak with him.
"Sire, j wolde with 3ow speken a word oþer two."
thanne seide sire vlphyn to hym ageyn:
"and *with* 3ow, Sire, now jn certeyn!"
So forth they wente*n*, ful wel j wot,
vlphyn on hors-bak, & þe good man on fot.
Ulfin alights,
and there Sire vlphyn alyht a-down
with that good man to han Som resown.
and asks who he is.
Sire vlphyn axede what he was.
he seide: "as an old man 3e sen jn þis plas,
and of my 3owthe wysdom j kan
as mochel as som other man"—
and þere tolde vlphyn of manye a thyng

5172. *hevyneſſe*, *y* corrected from *e*.
5190. *with*, *w* corrected from 3.

that to vlphyn there was wel knoweng,
and atte laste tolde hym Jn cownseyl
how he hadde j-ben atte Tyndagel,
and that but lytel while ago—
"where as a good man Seide me vnto
that 3owre kyng lovede the dewkis wyf,
and for hire distressed sore of his lif,
and 3oure kyng hath distroyed his lond,
For he ladde ygwerne from cardweill, j vndirstond.
and, Sire, and 3e wylen vndirstonden me,
3if 3owre kyng wyle 3even me large fe,
J knowe where that is a good man
that 3ow with ygwerne schal don speken than,
and that ful wel kan cownseillen 3oure kyng
of al his love to haven fondyng."
and whanne that vlphyn herde al this,
he merveillede what man he was, j-wis,
and preide hym to leven alle manere of thing,
and that man to bringen to the kyng
that of his love him cowde cownseille,
the bettere that it hym myhte avaylle.
thanne seide this olde man ageyn:
"j wile ferst knowen my wages, certeyn."
thanne axede of hym vlphyn there:
"where schal j 3ow fynde, telle me now here."
"To morwen 3e scholen me here fynde
betwene this and þe ost, haue þis jn mynde."
and so there departyd they ful snelle,
and seide to vlphyn þat he wolde hym telle
vppon the morwen Swiche tydyng—
"that to thin herte schal ben gret lykyng."
Anon Sire vlphyn to the kyng gan gon,
and told hym these wordis everichon.
thanne, whanne the kyng herde al this,
he lowhe and made gret joye and blis.
thanne seide the kyng to vlphyn a3e:
"knowe 3e þat man, and 3e hym se?"
"3e, sire, it is ryht an old man

The old man says he knows of the king's love for Ygwern,

and that he, for a handsome reward, will tell of one who can help the king.

Ulfin eagerly asks him to bring the man.

The old man wants first to know his reward.

They appoint to meet again next morning.

Ulfin returns home with the good news.

The king is delighted, and inquires about the man.

5210. *j*, MS. *jn*.

and feble, as j discryven kan." 5240

The king inquires about the appointed meeting.
"Sire vlphin, whanne hath he behoten the
a3en to Meten with 3ow, certeinle?"
"To Morwen j Moste with hym Mete,
and hym to tellen what 3e him behete." 5244
thanne seide the kyng, with-owten drede:
"thedyr, vlphyn, j preye thou me lede!"
"Sire, gladly," quod vlphyn, "that wyl j do."

He is willing to give any reward.
"and 3if behynden me 3e speken hym vnto, 5248
So behoteth hym what he wyle have,
oþer ony thing that he wyle of 3ow crave!"
and thus abyden they al that Nyht,
and the kyng was bothe joyful and lyht, 5252
Mochel Meriere thanne he was to-fore,
that ony of his Men knewen thore.

Next morning Ulfin and the king ride forth.
On the Morwe, aftyr Maſse, thanne vlphyn Rod,
and the kyng aftyr not longe abod, 5256
but Rod jnto swich a partye
[leaf 108 c] As he Was Gyded, sekerlye.
and whanne the ost they gonnen to pase,

They see a blind cripple,
a lame Man Syen they jn that plase, 5260
that Nethir ne Myht gon ne Se,
thus semed hem, ful certeinle.
So that anon they pasten hym by,

who calls out that he can help the king.
and thussone he sette vpe a lowd Cry. 5264
he seide: "sire kyng, god fulfille thi wille,
alle that thin herte desireth vntylle!
and 3if þou wilt 3even Me ony thyng,
j schal fulfille thyn owne desireng." 5268

The king looks at Ulfin, and asks if that is the man.
thanne loked the kyng on vlphin ful snelle,
and seide: "is thys he that scholde me telle
of Myn desir and of Myn honour?
how hast þou, vlphyn, don thyn labour?" 5272

Ulfin says no.
"Nay, Sire," quod vlphyn, "jt Nis not he
that j schold hauen, Sire, Sikerle,
that scholde me tellen of thy chawnse,
jt nys not he, with-owten variaunce." 5276

5263. *anō*, the *n*-mark in blacker ink. 5269. MS. *ōn*.

"knowest thou him that scholde meten the,
and of thing that j most love, to tellen me?
go thow to hym, & thus thou say,
that j the to hym sente this day,
and þat he schal have that he wyle axen of me,
of that j am jn sesyd, ful Sekerle;
he schal it haven at his owne wille,
3if that my desir he wyl fulfille!"

The king tells Ulfin to go to the man and grant him anything he shall demand.

vlphyn this word non thing ne took,
but sette hym down, and þe arende forsook,
besides this lame man sette hym adown.
thussone of vlphyn he axede a resown,
and axede of hym what he dide there,
and for what thing he cam forto enqwere.
he seide: "the kyng sente me to the,
and me to the hath 3oven, ful sikerle."
thanne gan to lawhen this man anon,
and seide þat—"þe kyng parceyved me son,
and knoweth me bettere thanne þou dost,
and seeth in me more thanne thou wost.
j wile that thou knowe, certeinle,
that thike old man me sente to the;
but of non thing j wyl the telle
of owht þat he to me of gan spelle.
go thow forth faste to the kyng,
and seie hym: and he wil hauen his askyng,
grete 3iftes moste he 3even, Jn fay,
his wil to parforme, 3if that J may.
For fulsone hadde he parceyved me,
þerfore þe bettere with hym schal it be."

Ulfin sits down with the cripple,

who laughingly says: "The king knows me better than you do.

I am sent by the old man.

If the king will have his desire, he must give great gifts.

"Fayn wolde j," quod vlphin, "of 3ow enqwere,
what that 3e ben, to tellen me here."
"Axe thou thy kyng," thanne seide this man,
"For he ful wel tellen the can."

Thou mayst ask the king who I am."

thanne to horsbak wente vlphyn anon,
and faste aftyr the kyng gan he gon.
and whanne the kyng Sawh hym comen rydynge:
"vlphyn, wherto comest þou, and for what thinge?
whanne to that man 3af j the,

Ulfin rides to the king.

5315. *mā* added above the line.

wherto comest þou aȝen to me?" 5316

Ulfin tells the king what the cripple has said.

thanne seide vlphyn to hym ageyn:
"he seith ȝe knewen hym, jn certeyn,
and konnen me tellen what that he is;
thus to me, Sire kyng, he seide j-wys." 5320

The king declares that the seemly old man and the cripple are the same person:

"Sye thou that man that spak to the
jn semblaunce of an old man so feythfulle?—
and this man that thow sye here this day,
al it is on, Sire vlphin, with-owten nay." 5324
"A, Sire kyng, how may this be, Sure,
that a man him-self scholde disfegure?"

[leaf 108 d]

"ȝe, Syre, J Hym knowe Wel and fyne,

Merlin.

For this same man, it js Merlyne!" 5328
Aȝen thanne wenten they bothe jn fere
anon with Merlyne to speken there.

Meanwhile, Merlin has gone to the king's tent in his natural shape.

and Merlyne was gon to þe kynges tente
jn his ryht Semblaunce, veramente, 5332
and axede aftyr the kyng anon.
thanne to seken wente messengeres þusson,

The king, being told,

and metten the kyng, and him tolde
that Merlyne was comen and hym haven wolde. 5336
thanne was the kyng so joyful a man,
that on word ne cowde he speken than,

quickly makes for home.

but tornede ageyn with al his myht,
and to hym clepede vlphyn ful ryht, 5340
and seide: "it is as j the seye:
Merlyne js comen now, certeinlye!"

Ulfin commends Merlin's power.

quod vlphyn: "now that ȝe haven hym at ȝowre wille,
alle ȝoure desire he may fulfylle. 5344
and loke þat [ȝe] graunten hym that he wyl have,
owther of ȝoure good what he wyl krave,
For þere nys no man þat kan so wel as he
to ygwernes love ȝow bryngen, sykerle." 5348
thanne to hym seide the kyng ageyn:
"his wille wile j fulfillen, certeyn!"

They find Merlin in the tent.

Thus riden they forth to þe kynges tente,
there Fownden merlyn anon presente. 5352

5345. MS. þ graūten.

and whanne the kyng hym gan aspye,
to hym he ran ful hastylye,
and hym embraced, and kyste also,
and ful gret joye he made him tho,
and seide that ryht welcomen he was,
and often hym kyste jn that plas,
and seide: "to 3ow j wolde me compleyne,
but 3e knowen it as wel as j, certeyne;
For was there neuere non man
that me can declaren that 3e kan;
and þerfore j preye 3ow, for charite,
of myn hertly desir to helpen me!"
"j vndirstonde 3ow wel, with-owten nay,
but with-owten [vlphyn] j schal nowht say."
thanne wenten they alle thre on syde,
and jn cownseill spoken that jlke tyde.
thanne tolde the kyng to Merlyne anone
that to vlphyn he tolde thussone—
"that 3e weren that olde man,
and sethen the toþer þat he beheld than."
thanne vlphyn faste beheld him there:
"may it so ben jn ony manere,
lyk as the kyng here telleth me?"
"3e, Sire vlphyn," quod merlyne, "certeinle!
For assone as he the to me sente,
thanne wist y wel he hadde knoweliching, veramente."
"Now, Sire kyng," quod vlphyn thanne,
"Speke 3e to merlyne, this good manne,
of Swich thinges as 3e haven to do,
and that he wolde 3ow helpen þerto."
thanne seide the kyng to hym ageyn
that— "j kan neþer non thing don ne seyn,
that he ne knoweth myn hole entent,
thowh j scholde maken lesynges, verament.
and sethen that al myn herte þat he doth knowe
and alle myn prevy thowhtes vppon a rowe,
wherefore j preye 3ow, for charyte,
To Ygwernes love that 3e helpen me.

The king gives him a hearty welcome,

and refers to his own sore distress.

Merlin says he understands him.

The king tells Merlin of his having seen through his twofold disguise.

Ulfin is incredulous,

but Merlin confirms the king's words.

The king avows that Merlin knows all his thoughts,

and implores his assistance.

5366. MS. *with owten j.*
5375. *lyk*, *l* through correction. 5378. MS. *wifty.*

and what thing that Evere thou biddest me do,
J schal it fulfillen with-owten Mo!"
thanne seide to hym Merlyne ageyn:
"and thow wilt fulfyllen, jn certeyn,
Of thing that j schal axen of the,
Ryht Wel thyn Arende J-sped schal be,
and jn hire chambre schalt thow Slepe,
and jnto hire bed schalt thow lepe,
and liggen to-gederis bothe two,
body to body, Er that thow go."
thanne gan to lawhen Sire vlphyn,
whanne he herde that so spak Merlyn.
thanne seide the kyng to Merlyne tho:
"herkeneth now what j sey 3ow vnto:
loke what Maner of thing that 3e wilen crave;
and it Mowe be fownden, 3e scholen it have!"
thanne answeryd Merlyne, ful certeinle:
"how þere-offen Myht y Syker now be?"
thanne seide the kyng to Merlyne ageyn:
"what Sewraunce axen 3e, sey me ful pleyn,
and j schal fulfillen thy wille,
what so Evere come Me vntylle!"
"j wyle that vlphyn swere to Me
that þere-offen siker schal j be.
and whanne to Me hath he sworn Everydel,
vppon the Morwen, wete thou Ryht wel
that al thy wil schalt thow have
of me, swich thing as þou dost crave."
thanne seide the kyng, he wolde fulfille
alle þat Evere he seide hym vntylle.
thanne axede Merlyne of vlphyn there
3if that Sewrawnce he wolde swere.
"jt forthenketh me," quod vlphyn, "trewely,
that oth to swere, Natheles wele j."

Whanne Merlyne herde this acord,
anon gan he lawhen at that word,
and axede whanne þe Surawnce Mad scholde be.
thanne anon the kyng let bryngen, Sykerle,
alle the Reliques that he hadde there,

Merlin, on a certain condition, promises to help the king to the [leaf 109 *a*] possession of Ygwern.

Ulfin rejoices;

the king is willing to give Merlin anything within his power.

Merlin wants Ulfin to be security for the fulfilment of the king's promise.

Not without scruples, Ulfin complies.

The king's relics are brought.

and his oþer holy thinges Jn fere;
and þere-vppon Sworen they bothe two
that Merlyne to hem devisede tho.
and they sworen be his Sewrawnce,
jt scholde be don with-owten variawnce,
with-owten frawde other Mal-Engyne;
this oth Sworen they to Merlyne.
and aftyr this, with-owten dowtaunce,
the kyng to vlphyn swor, with-owten variaunce,
To kepen sekerly that he hadde hyht,
as that he was a trewe knyht.
thanne seide the kyng to Merlyne tho:
"Now sethen oure Surawnce þat we have do,
that ȝe wolden don that ȝe hauen hyht,
and therto to putten alle ȝowre Myht,
My desir forto don and to fulfille
of thyke that j spak to ȝow of vntylle!"
thanne seide Merlyne to the kyng:
"ȝow behoveth over alle Maner thing
to ben sad Jn ȝowre Governaunce,
For sche is wis, with-owten varyaunce,
and therto trewe aȝens God and Man.
and now the sothe j schal preven ȝow than,
what power j haue hyre forto Engyne,
ȝe scholen now heren be craft Myne.
the semblaunce of þe dewk j wyl putten to the,
that non Man schal ȝow from hym knowen, sikerle.
and thike dewk hath two knyhtes,
that he trosteth passyng owt-Ryhtes,
and to hym they ben Most preve
of alle þe Men jn cristyente,
and to Ygwerne they ben also
the prevyest Men that Mown go.
the ton of hem Sire Bretel hyhte,
The tothir, jordayns, a Man of Myhte.
And Bretelis semblaunce j wil take,
And Vlphyn Jordayns Schal not Forsake.
so the castel gates j schal don vndo,
and jn to Entren, with-owten Mo,
alle thre jn this Semblaunce;

5432 First the king and Ulfin swear on the relics after Merlin's dictation;

5436

5440 then the king swears another oath for the security of Ulfin.

5444

5448 This being done, Merlin says: "You must act prudently, for Ygwern is a wise and true woman.

5452

5456 I will put on you the figure of the duke.

The duke has two confidants,

5460

Bretel (p. 130) and Jordan.

5464

I and Ulfin will take [leaf 109 b] their shapes.

5468 Thus we shall all get into Ygwern's castle.

thus scholen we gon, with-owten variaunce.
Meanwhile, let your barons stay quietly outside the duke's castle,
but whanne we gon alle jn fere,
3oure barowns a3en þat 3e retourne þere,
and chargeth hem jn alle wyse
that to þe castel they maken non aprise
jnto þe tyme that 3e comen ageyn;
that 3e hem 3yven warneng ful pleyn.
and tell nobody where we are going."
and that to non man that 3e sende
whedyr 3e schole gon, j 3ow forfende."
thanne swor the kyng be his oth,
he wold it not don for lef ne loth.
"thanne Trosteth me, with-owten variaunces,
J schal 3ow delyveren these semblaunces."

The king follows Merlin's directions,
Anon the kyng dyde his devere
of thinges that merlyne comanded hym þere.
and whanne that thus hadde he do,
thanne anon to merlyne gan he go,
and seide: "j have fulfild 3owre byddyng,
Now do 3e myn ouer alle thyng!"
"Lete vs remeve," quod merlyne, "welsone,
and alle thre to-gederis scholen we gone."
and the three start for Tyndagel.
So longe alle thre to-gederis paste,
that to tyndagel they comen atte laste.
thanne seide merlyne to the kyng:
"betwixen vlphyn and me make 3oure abydyng."
and whanne merlyne hadde wrowht al his thyng,
thanne seide he anon to the kyng:
The king is told to rub himself with a herb,
"Take 3e this herbe that is here,
and Frote 3owre visage al jn fere,
3oure hondis, 3oure body, 3oure feet also;
jn alle wyse that 3e thus do."
the kyng thanne dide his comaundement.
and is invested with the figure of the duke.
thanne hadde he hol semblaunce, verament,
lik as the dewk it hadde j-be,
j Seye 3ow, Sires, ful certeinle.
thanne cam merlyne to þe kyng:

5470. The line was omitted and then written down the margin.
5492. *tyndagel*, *dag* through correction (probably from *gel*).

"be-thenke 3ow now of a thyng:
3if Evere jordayn that 3e sye."
"3is," quod the kyng thanne, "Sekerlye!"
thussone hadde vlphyn jordayns lyknesse;
To-forn the kyng he gan him dresse.
and whanne the kyng beheld al this,
he merveilled howh it myhte ben, j-wis.
thanne axede the kyng of vlphyn there:
"how thenkest þou be My semblaunce here?"
"Sire," quod vlphyn, "be this day
j knowe 3ow not but for þe dewk, jn fay!"
and the kyng him tolde, with-owten varyawnce,
that Evene hadde he jordayns Semblawnce.
and thanne loked they bothe vppon merlyn tho,
and Bretelis semblaunce hem semede bothe two.
thanne thus abyden they al jn fere,
tyl that the day was past so clere.
and whanne the day was over past,
toward the castel they comen jn hast,
and comen to the castel gate,
and merlyne, as Bretel, clepid þere-ate.
thanne þe Meyne that was þere with-jnne,
comen to the 3ate, and wolden not blynne.
and whanne they Syen the dewk verrayly,
as to here Semeng, ful certeinly:
"openeth the 3ate, taketh jn 3owre lord!"
thus seide merlyne jn Bretelis word.
thanne thowhten alle þat with-jnne weren than,
that it was the dewk, Bretel, & jordayn.
thanne Bretel charged al that Meyne
That jn alle thinges they scholde kepen it preve—
"And telleth non Man of the dukes comenge,
J 3ow charge aboven alle thynge."
but certein peple jnowe þere were
that the dwchesse it tolde to there.
and tyl they comen jnto þe jnnere paleys,
Er thanne wolde they not Ses.

The king is desired to think of Jordan,

and in the same moment Ulfin stands before him in Jordan's shape.

Merlin puts on the appearance of Bretel.

In the evening, they all go to Ygwern's castle.

Merlin tells the garrison to let in their lord,

[leaf 109 c] and to keep his arrival secret.

5506. *a* added above the line.
5509. *vlphyn*, *v* corrected from *j*.
5522. *waf*, *f* correeted from *t*.

and Merlyn took the kyng on side,
and hym cownseilled that jlke tyde
that of lyht chere he Scholde be.
The king, attended by Merlin and Ulfin, goes into Ygwern's bed-room. and so jnto chambre wenten they alle thre,
there as Ygwerne on bedde lay;
alle thre they weren, the sothe to say.
and as hastely as they myhte,
the kyng sone they gonnen vndyhte,
tyl that with ygwerne jn bedde he was,
where Arthewr was be-geten jn þat plas.
She is joyful at the arrival of the pretended husband. gret Joye thanne made that lady,
that hire lord wende haue had, verrayly,
which that sche lovede Jn herte and thowht;
but thanne anothir was to hire j-browht.
and thus to-gederis they lyen that nyht,
the dwchesse and that gentyl knyht,
In the morning, there arrives news of a battle in which the duke has been killed. and tyl on the morwen, that it was day,
that jn the town they gonne to say
that the dewk j-slayn there was,
and his styward taken Jn that plas.
Merlin steals into the bed-room, Anon cam Merlyne ful prevyly
þere as the kyng lay the lady by,
and asks the king to rise and seide: "Sire, now ryseth vp anon,
For Merveillous tydynges here now gon,
that algates ȝe scholden ben ded;
þerfore rise vpe owt of this sted!
and to hasten home, as his people must think him dead. and that ȝe weren at ȝowre castel,
For al ȝowre peple weneth ful wel
that Sekerly ȝe scholden ben slayn;
Swiche wordis ben comen, Jn certayn."
"Non wondir," quod the kyng tho,
"For so prevyly j gan from hem go,
that there-offen ne wyste knyht ne sweyne
Sauf onliche J and ȝe tweyne."
The king rises, thanne vpe he ros, and non lengere abod,
and to-forn hem alle that there stod
bids a loving farewell to Ygwern, he took his leve of gentyl Ygwerne,
and hire often kyste, and wolde not werne,

5565. *vp* added above the line.

and isswed owt of that castel, — and passes out of the castle.
that be hym Supposede non man but wel.
And whanne that owt they weren j-gon,
thanne seide Merlyne to the kyng anon: — Now Merlin reminds him of their agreement.
"J haue the fulfyld myn covenaunt,
that j the made, and myn avenant,
and þerfore loke that thou holde me myne,"
Seide to the kyng thanne Merlyne.
"that is ful trewe," quod the kyng tho,
"Ful good Servyse ȝe han me do.
bettere neuere man to oþer don myhte,
as that j am a gentyl knyhte.
and therfore thy mede qwyten J schal, — The king declares he will keep it.
as j am trewe kyng j-kyd oueral.
Sey on what thyng that thow wilt crave,
and Feithfully thou schalt it haue!"
thanne seide Merlyne to hym ageyn: — Merlin demands the fruit of the king's unlawful intercourse:
"An eyr thow hast be-getyn, jn certeyn,
vppon Ygwerne that dewchesse,
which is a sone, jn ful Sekernesse, — his son and heir, whom Ygwern will give birth to.
and that child hast thou ȝoven me
For my gwerdoun, Sire, Sikerle.
and loke that thou wryte bothe day and owr
That thou hast wrowht this dishonowr;
thanne schalt thou knowen in eche weye
ȝyf Jt be trowthe that J the seye." — [leaf 109 *d*]
Anon Riht so thanne dede the kyng, — The king assents.
and fulfilled al his askyng.

So thanne reden they forth al jn fere, — The three men ride to a river,
Tyl that they comen to on Revere,
and there they weschen hem alle thre — wash there,
here owne Semblaunce to haven, sekerle. — recover their natural shapes,
So pasten they forth in gret haste,
tyl to here ost they comen atte laste. — and get back to the army.
and whanne that his meyne gan hym aspye,
abowtes hym they flokkeden hastelye,
and of hem axede he anon

5599. *that* corrected from *the*.

how that the dewk ded was so son.

The king is told how the duke, when noticing the king's absence from the army,

and they hym tolden, ful certeynlye,
how that cas befyl, ful openlye:
"Jt happede, as sone as ȝe were gon,
Ful preve we kepten vs Everychon;
and that parceyved the dewk thussone,
that owt of the ost ȝe were gone,
and dyde armen his Men jn haste,

made a sally from the castle,

that so on vs they comen welfaste,
and Mochel harm deden on owre Meyne.
anon to armes thanne gonnen we fle,
and vppon hem we precede welfaste,
tyl to the ȝates we comen atte laste.
So there the dewk fawht sore, certeyn,

and was killed in the ensuing battle.

tyl that his hors vndyr hym was Slayn,
and there the dewk was beten adown
with ȝowre Men abowtes jn virown,
whiche that knewen hym non thyng,
that so cawhte he there his Endyng.
and the Remenaunt of his Meyne fowhten wel sore,
whanne that they syen here lord ded thore."

The king is sorry.

Thanne ouerthowhte the kyng ful sore, j-wis,
of the dewkys deth, with-owten Mys.

Chap. V.

Thus, as this Storye Reherseth wel,
Ended the dewk of tyndagel;
and the kyng ouerthowhte welsore
of the aventure þat was fallen thore.

He summons his council, and wishes to give compensation.

Anon his cownseyl thanne dide he calle
This trespas to a-Menden forth withalle,
and that his Meyne hym blamen ne scholde,
but that amendis fayn Maken he wolde.
thanne be-spak vlfyn, ful certeynle,
that with the kyng was ful preve.
"Sire," seide vlphyn, "sethen jt is now so,
Nedly amendis Moste be do."

Ulfin takes the barons aside,

thanne took vlphyne the barowns on syde,
and with hem cownseilede at that tyde.

5652. *Nedly*, *e* through correction.

" how mown we best amendes make
to this lady for hire lordis sake
and to hire frendes everychon,
that for his deth maken gret mon?
of wheche the kyng now doth 3ow preye
hym to cownseillen jn the beste weye."
" that welen we don with good wille,
and owre wittes it fulfylle.
but, goode vlphyn, alle we 3ow preye,
the beste cownseille þat 3e welen vs seye,
For 3e knowen best the kynges entent,
what he thynketh to'don, verament."
" hopen 3e thanne that j am so preve
with the kyng Jn alle dègre?"
" Sere, 3e, we knowen the for a wys man,
and mochel of good cownseyl thow can."
thanne seide vlphyn to hem ageyn:
" myn avis j schal 3ow seyn, certeyn,
and thanne 3if ony bettere 3e konnen do,
that 3e wolde seyen jt me vnto.
J wolde that the kyng wolde don sende
Alle abowtes, jnto everich ende
Where that the dewk Hath ony meyne,
at Tyndagel to maken Semble.
and thedyr wolde j that the kyng wente
there with hem to meten jn good entente,
and don his Frendis comen hym before,
and also the lady that is thore.
so that the kyng hym qwyten schal, certeynle,
afore alle the peple that there be;
that 3if they Refusen his proferyng,
3e scholen holden hem folis ouer alle thing,
and the kyng to holden a passyng wys man,
that so mochel wele proferyn hem than."
thanne answerede these barowns ageyn:
" to 3ow we acorden, Jn certeyn!"
thanne comen they alle to-fore the kyng,
and tolden hym al of here cownseyllyng,
and how they cownseilled hem betwen;
what therby hym thowhte, now let Sen:

and asks their opinion.

The barons defer to Ulfin

whom they consider a wise man.

Ulfin proposes a general meeting at Tyn- [leaf 110 *a*] dagel,

where the king is to offer satisfaction.

The barons approve of this.

The proposal is put before the king.

The king consents, and sends messengers to the late duke's kinsmen.

Anon the kyng concentyd therto,
and comanded Messengeris faste forto go
with his lettres jnto Eche contre,
To the dewkis kennesmen, ful sekerle,
and that to hym they scholde comen Echon
Jn pes and trews to comen an gon,
and there amendement to Maken, certeyne,
of alle thing they wolde compleyne.
3it thowhte the kyng thanne ful wel
Forto Remeve jnto Cardewel.

Merlin informs the king that the advice given him by the barons is in reality Ulfin's.

thanne Merlyne to the kyng cam anon,
and to hym tolde there thusson:
"weten 3e hos js this cownsaylle?"
"Nay," quod the kyng, "with-owten faille,
but that al My Baronye
hath me thus cownceilled, trewelye!"
"Nay," quod Merlyne, "jt Nys not so,
But vlphynes cownseyl halpe þerto.
For he is bothe wis and war,
and þe pes amonges hem declarede thar
bettere thanne alle they cowden devyse
owther it ordeynen Jn ony wyse."
thanne axede the kyng of Merlyn
what thing it was that thowhte vlphyn.

He further reveals to the king Ulfin's secret plan (pp. 160 f.),

and þere Merlyn declared hym anon
alle vlphynes thowhtes Everichon.
and whanne the kyng herde al this,
Ful Mochel Joye he Made, j-wys.
"how thenken 3e?" quod the kyng tho,
"Myht it ony wyse bettere be do?"
"Nay," quod Merlyne, "ful Sekerle,

of which he greatly approves.

Jt is the beste cownseille þat May be;
thanne hast thow thyn hertly Entent,
that thou hast desired, verament.
Now from the thanne wele j gon,

Finally he wishes to speak with Ulfin and the king together.

but with vlphyn and the j wele speken alon.
and whanne from 3ow that j am past,
thanne Mihtest þou axen vlphyn jn hast

5707. *cownfaylle*, *a* corrected from *e*.

how that this pes he gan ordeygne:"
and þe kyng seide he wolde, certeygne.

Anon thanne clepede the kyng vlphyn
To come spekyn *with* hym and *with* Merlyn.
thanne seide Merlyne jn here precense:
" Sere, 3e me grawntyd, *with*-owten offense,
that j scholde haven, to 3owre powere,
the child which that is 3ow[re] Eyre,
whiche 3e begoten on that dewchesse,
that Noble lady, ful of humbelnesse,
whiche non Resown that jt is
That 3e it kepen to 3owre ews, j-wis.
For 3e han put þat tyme jn Escript,
For that the trowthe 3e scholde Wyt.
and Ek also 3e knowen Ryht wel
that by me 3e Engendred it Everydel;
So that the Synne Js Most Myn,
3if j it not brynge to othyr fyn.
and Ek the Modyr aschamed scholde be
hyt Forto Norschen, ful Sekerle;
For wommen ne haven non wyt therto
here owne cownseille to helen so.
therefore wolde J that vlphyn here
me wrot a bylle be ony Manere,
bothe the Nyht and Ek the Owr
whanne thou dedest that goode labowr.
For no More schalt thou Me Se
Tyl the day of his birthe, ful sekerle,
and that same Nyht he schal be bore.
but of on thing j preye the be-fore:
that 3e leven vlphyn, what so he say,
be it be Nyht owther be day.
For nothing ne wele he tellen the,
but that profit & worschepe to þe schal be.
For the Sixe Mownthes aftyr this
with the ne schal j speken, j-wys,
and with the to speken at that tym,

In the presence of Ulfin, Merlin says to the king: "You have granted me the child which is to be born.

You cannot keep it yourself,

[leaf 110 *b*]

and the mother would be ashamed to nourish it.

Let Ulfin write down the night of its engendering.

Now you shall not see me for some time.

But believe in Ulfin:

his advice will be profitable;

5740. MS. *3ow.* 5742. *of* added above the line.
5756. *me*, MS. *we.*

to him I will speak."
but onlich schal j speken with vlphyn.
and what that Evere to hym j seye,
loke ȝe it beleven be ony weye!"

Ulfin writes down the engendering of the child. Then Merlin says to the king privately: "Ygwern shall be thy spouse,
Thus wrot vlphyn thengendrynge
there anon at the kynges byddynge.
and Merlyne took the kyng on Syde,
and hym there tolde at that tyde:
"Syre kyng, Ygwerne thou schalt take,
and trostyly sche schal be thy Make.

but say nothing to her of your previous intercourse.
and loke thow be war Jn alle degre
that sche ne knowe nothing of the,
Neþer that thou hast be hire j-leye;
j the defende be ony weye.
For that schal ben cause, wel þou wost,
that sche wele offen abaschen hire most.

If thou ask who is the father of her child, she shall not be able to answer, and be much ashamed."
For ȝif thow axe that lady Mylde
be whom that sche goth so with childe,
sche schal not konnen the answere
ho that is the fadyr, Jn non Manere,
So þat gret schame to hire schal be,
whanne þou to hire spekyst of swich degre.'

The king and Ulfin go to Cardwell;
Thus took Merlyne his leve there,
and the kyng and vlphyn leften jn fere,
and gonnen to taken here jornay
streyht to cardwell, the sothe to say.

Merlin goes to Blasy.
and Merlyne forth to Blasye wente
hym forto tellen his hol Entente
of this aventure and othere Mo;
Jnto scripture they deden it tho.
So now we knowen be that scripture
of these aventures, J ȝow Enswre.

The king speaks of the peace-making with his counsellors.
and whanne the kyng cam to kardweille,
anon sente he aftyr his cownseylle,
and axede hem what was best to do
of this pes-Makyng, with-owten Mo.
thanne answered they hym anon ageyn:
"pes to þe dewchesse Maken, jn certeyn,

5775. *and*, *d* through correction (probably from *ð*).

and to the dewkes Frendis also,
that to tyndagel now ben j-go"—
and that they scholde agreen ou*er* al thing
jn Resou*n* of acordement of the kyng.
Thus wente*n* the barowns to tyndagel,
and the kyng abod at cardweille,
And took vlphyn there tha*n*ne onside,
And to hym seide there Jn that tyde,
and axede hym of that cownseyl there,
how þ*er*by hym lykede Jn his Manere.
and he answerede: "sire, Ryht wel
Me liketh therby now. Every del."
tha*n*ne seide the kyng to hym ageyn:
"vlphyn, the pes thow hast ordeyned, certeyn,
and with-jnne thyn herte thou hast it knyt,
and what it is, wel knowe Jch Jt!"
"thanne, ȝif that the pes be ordeyned by Me,
and ȝif ȝe it knowe*n* thanne, Sykerle,
thanne conne*n* ȝe the sothe Seye,
ȝif that it owht ȝow plese, Jn feye."
Anon thanne answerede þe kyng vlphyn,
and seide: "it pleseth me now wel and fyn,
and lyk so as thow devised hast here,
J wolde it were wrowht Jn alle Manere."
"Nou, goode sere, Enter*m*ete ȝow non thing,
J schal it bryngen to good Endyng."
Therto the kyng him preyde ful faste,
and that Jt Myhte be don Jn al haste.
thus Endyd they here cownsaille,
and forth wente*n* the Messengeris, with-owte*n* faille,
Tyl that they come*n* to Tyndagel,
where as they fownden that lady Lel
and alle the dewkis Frendis also,
that to that lady j-comen weren tho.
tha*n*ne tolde these Messengeres þ*er*e ano*n*,
Toforn tho lordis Everichon,
how that worthy dewk of high parage
there was slayn be his owne owtrage,
and seiden that the kyng ou*er*thowht Ryht sore
of that dede that was don thore,

5808 5812 5816 5820 5824 5828 5832 5836 5840 5844

The king speaks with [leaf 110 *c*] Ulfin on the point.

He says that he knows Ulfin's plan,

and that he is well pleased with it.

The king's messengers go to Tyndagel,

and speak before the assembled nobility of the duke's death,

and of the king's desire to make peace.

wherfore gladly he wolde maken the pes—
'and therfore vs hider he ches
To that lady and his kyn also;
This is the cause we comen 3ow to."

The duchess's counsellors are favourably disposed,

thanne sien wel the ladyes cownsail
that forto stryven, it wolde not avail,
and concentyd ful wel hem to.

go to her

And to that lady they wenten tho,
and tolden hire the answere, as it was,
of þe kynges Messengeres jn þat plas,
and how he was slayn be owtrage—
"3owre worthy lord of hygh parage.
and wete 3e wel now, jn certeyn,
that a3ens the kyng Mown 3e not geyn.

and advise her to listen to the king's offer.

and þerfore lesteneth and tent that 3e take
what maner of pes that the kyng wyl Make.
and jn swich Manere Mown they seye,
that they scholen not ben Refused, jn feye.
For of tweyne badde it is good to take
the bettere, and jt not forsake.
lo, lady, thus to 3ow we Say,
now 3e Mown don as 3ow liketh this day!"

The duchess consents.

Thanne answerid this lady ageyn:
"3owre cownseyl j Nele forsaken, certeyn,
For of My lordis cownseyl 3e were,
and so of Myn 3e scholen ben here.
For j ne knowe non better jn My lond,
That j Myhte better trosten, j vndirstond."

Her counsellors return to the king's messengers,

Thanne departyd they from here cownseyl anon,
and to the kynges Messengeris gonne they gon.
thanne [on] of the wisest to hem Spak there,
and thus hem answerede Jn this Manere:
"Jt Js My ladyes hol Entent
to weten what þe kyng Meneth, verament,
of hire lord, that thus ded Js,

and ask for particulars.

what his Mendis scholde ben, with-owten Mys."
thanne answerede the Messengeris ageyn:

5851. *cownfail*, *a* corrected from *e*. 5877. MS. *thāne of*.

"we knowen not þe kynges wille, jn certeyn,
But that he ful pes and gryth Wyle make
to this lady for hire lordis Sake,
and bad that ȝe scholden vs leve,
For as we seyn, he wyl Jt preve."
"thanne hopen we þe kyng wyl don wel
and a-menden jt Everydel,
and so trewe we holden ȝow therto,
so that non otherwyse ȝe wylen do."
thus was ajorned jnto the xv day
thanne aftyr next Seweng, with-owten delay,
that the lady and hire cownsaylle
to-forn the kyng schold comen, with-owten faylle,
To heren there the kynges wylle—
"what a-mendement he wele don ȝow vntylle."
thanne seide the ladyes conseil ageyn:
"we wilen gladliche, Jn certeyn,
So that we sauf cowndyt have
From tyndagel thedyr to comen save,
and from cardweille to tyndagel aȝen;
lo, thus acordyd alle we ben."
thus knytten they vpe that Ende þere,
and hom they wenten jn fair Manere,
and tolden the kyng Every del
how that here Massage was Endyd wel,
and that þe lady cowndyt wolde have—
"that sche to ȝow Myht comen Save."
thanne answerede the kyng a-geyn;
"Sche ne axeth but Resown, Jn certeyn!"
thus at Cardweylle Soiorned the kyng,
and with hym vlphyn Jn cownceillyng,
and spoken of Manye dyvers Matere,
whiles that they weren bothe jn fere.
that so aȝens the fyftenethe day
the kyng Sente saufcondit, with-owten delay;
So that the lady and hire cownsaille,
To Cardweille comen they, sauns faille.
and whanne assembled they weren Echon,
the kynges conseil and they Jn on,
thanne let the kyng of hem Enqwere,

The messengers reply [leaf 110 *d*] that they only know of the king's wish to make peace,

and propose another meeting, to be held before the king in a fortnight.

The proposal is accepted on condition of safe-conduct.

The messengers return to Cardwell.

The king is pleased.

Safe-conduct is given, and the duchess and her counsellors arrive at Cardwell.

The king sends word to know what satisfaction they desire.

what amendis that they wolden asken þere. 5924
thanne answerede the ladyes conseil ageyn:
"this was not owre comeng, jn certeyn,
Forto asken here ony thyng,

They say they will leave it with the king.

but to knowen the wyl of the kyng, 5928
and what pes and what acord
he wolde Maken for this worthy lord.
and this is owre ladyes Entent,
we seye 3ow, sires, now verament." 5932
thanne the cownseyl vppon the kynges side
anon to the kyng comen that tyde,
and tolden hym of the ladyes answere,
that he hire conseyl sche seide there. 5936

The king thinks the duchess a wise lady.

and whanne the kyng herde al this,
a wys lady he held hire, J-wys.
thanne clepyd he his Barowns Everichon,
anon to conseyl thanne gonnen they gon, 5940

He asks his barons to settle the peace.

and axede of hem jn what Manere
they thowhten forto Maken þe pes þere.

They want to get out of it,

thanne answered the cownseyl ageyn:
"we knowen non so wel, jn certeyn, 5944
that þe pes kan ordeynen and Make
So wel as 3e for the dewkis Sake."

but the king insists.

thanne seide the kyng to hem there:
"jn 3owre ordenaunce j have put it here, 5948
and what that Evere to Me 3e do,
certeyn, j wele concenten þerto,
and Neuere 3owre ordenaunce j schal with-seye,
what so Evere 3e demen, jn feye!" 5952
thanne answerede the cownseil tho:

After much hesitation,

"Sire, a gret charge 3e putten vs vnto,
That we ne doren not vndirtake,

[leaf 111 *a*]

But 3if that Sewraunce 3e Welen vs Make 5956
that what so Evere we granten of the,
there-offen to haven non Mawgre."
thanne spak vlphyn with-owten taryeng:
"j trowe that a fool 3e holden the kyng, 5960
whanne 3e welen not beleven his word,
þat he to 3ow seith be his owne acord!"

they undertake the task,

"3is, hym beleven we, ful Sekerlye,

but of on thyng we wolden hym preye:
that ȝe with vs myhten be
this pes forto enden feythfulle,
and to discuren to the kyng
what that Js owre conseillyng;
and we after ȝoure conseil wil do,
what so evere belonge þerto."

but desire Ulfin to be their helper and spokesman.

Whanne the kyng herde hem axen this,
Semblaunce of gladnesse he made, j-wys,
and seide to vlphyn with wordis sadde
"A riche man j haue the made,
ek norsched, and wis þou art þerto;
þerfore with hem schalt þou forth go
and conseille hem as thou best can,
For j holde the a ful wys man."
thanne seide vlphyn to the kyng:
"Sire, j ȝow warne of on thyng:
that kyng ne prynce owhte not to be
to famulyer with his meyne,
Nethyr to lowliche he scholde hym make
the hertes of his men forto take."

The king gladly

tells Ulfin to join the barons.

Ulfin passes a remark on princes and their courtiers.

thus wente vlphyn to cownseil anon,
and alle the Barowns everichon.
and whanne ensembled they weren jn fere,
thanne axeden they of vlphyn there
what hym thowghte best to do.
thanne seide vlphyn hem vnto:
"wel weten ȝe that the kyng
on vs hath put alle manere of thyng.
Now þerfore to the lady let vs now gon,
to weten ȝif that sche so wyle don!"
thanne wente they forth anon jn hye
to þat lady & to hire conseil, trewelye,
and tolden hem of the kynges wylle,
how he ensured was hem vntylle
and forto holden hym fully agre,
what ende so they maden, Sykerle—
"þerfore we comen to weten of ȝow here
ȝif ȝe wylen don jn that manere."

Ulfin goes with the barons.

He wants them first to ascertain whether also the duchess will hold herself bound by their decision.

The counsellors of the duchess having taken the matter into consideration,

thanne answereden they, with-owten faille,
here-vppon it were good to taken consaille,
and seiden anon hem be-twene
that in better cas myht it not bene
thanne þe kyng to putten it on his lordynges,
bothe high and lowh, of alle manер of thinges.
"what myhte the kyng bettere do?
þerfore, lady, concenteth ȝe þerto!"

the duchess agrees,

So that this lady with-owten more
Concented to here conseille thore.

and assurances are given on both sides.

thanne was þere mad Siker assuraunce
on bothe partyes, with-owten variaunce.
thanne to conseyl gonne þese barowns gon,
and ech of other enqwered anon;
thanne eche man his avis gan seyn.
Anon of vlphyn axeden they pleyn
how him thowhte be here avys.

Then Ulfin says:

"Sires, riht ful wel, as men of prys!
Now myn avis j schal ȝow telle,
and ȝe welen lestene to my spelle.

"You know that the duke was killed innocently, [leaf 111 *b*]

wel weten ȝe the dewk ded was
be the kynges strengthe jn that plas,
And trespaced non thyng, As J ȝow seye,
jn non cawse, that he scholde deye,

his wife is left with child,

and that the lady Js left with childe,
and þerto hire londis ben mad bothe bare and wilde,
and therto a good womman sche is, Sikerle,
welful of wysdom and of Bownte.

and his kinsmen have suffered great losses;

more over the dewkes kynnes-men also
Ful mochel harm & los han cawht þerto.

hence compensation must be given.

and þerfore me Semeth ryht good Resoun
that the kyng hem make restetucioun,
So that here love he myhte have
and jn his lond to dwellen more save.

On the other side, our king has no wife;

On the tothir side ȝe knowen echon,
that owre kyng ne haveth wyf non,
So that me semeth be myn avys,

6019. MS. *hem*. 6022. *ȝe* added above the line.
6023. *ȝe* through correction, daubed.
6036. *jn*, *j* through correction.

the kyng ne may not wel mendyn thys
lasse thanne hire to his wif he take,
and thus hire amendis forto make;
the wheche schal torne hym to honour
and of al his rem to haven favour;
For whanne they heren this jlke pes,
they welen hym loven, with-owten les.
and þat the dewkys dowhter wedden they wolde
To the kyng of orkanye with plente of golde;
and alle þe Remenaunt of his meyne,
Ful wel agreed scholen they be,
so þat they scholen holden hym for a ryht wys kyng,
and him loven and worschepen aboven alle thyng."

therefore he ought to marry the duchess.

Her daughter might be married to the king of Orkney."

"Now haven ȝe J-herde what J kan say;
now ech man his avis tellith, j ȝow pray,
whethyr that ȝe welen concenten therto
as j have here J-seid, owthir oþer-wyse do."
thanne answerid they alle anon ageyn:
"we concentyn therto, Jn certeyn,
For the beste conseille thow hast J-told
that ony man myhte Seyn jn this mold!"
"ȝet seyn ȝe not j-now," quod vlphyn tho,
"but welen ȝe alle concenten therto,
and ȝif ȝe seyn so everychon,
thanne with this answere forth wele j gon.
ȝe sen wel þe kyng of orkeneye js here;
on hym schal stondyn mochel of my matere."
Thanne tolde vlphyn his avis
To-Forn the kyng and alle his.
whanne the kyng herde this acord,
anon he answerede and seide þis word:
"what that evere on me that ȝe seye,
J schal neuere breken this pes, Jn feye!"
and whanne the tothyr partye herden this,
they helden hem ful agreed, j-wys,
and comen to the kynges tente,

All consent,

and praise his counsel.

The king, in the presence of his people, is informed of the proposed conditions,

and accepts them.

6041. *wif* added above the line.
6068. *ād*, corrected afterwards from *an*.
6070. *seide*, MS. *herde*.

Then all assemble.

and the lady was aftyr sente,
and alle tho that at thike conseyl were,
anon to-forn the kyng they comen there.
thanne, whanne assembled they weren Echon,

Ulfin rehearses the conditions of peace.

vlphyn there stood vp Ryht anon,
and amonges hem alle declared this pes
Jn Every poynt, Er that he wolde ses,
and axede of þe barowns, with-owten faylle:
"was not this now 3owre consaylle?"

These are accepted by the duchess's party,

Anon therto they acordeden alle,
boþe that weren jn tente oþer jn halle.
thanne seide vlphyn to the kyng:
"how sey 3e be this acordyng,
thus to Maken these good mennes pes
and Ek the ladyes here neuertheles?"

avowed by king Uter,

"3is," quod the kyng anon tho,
"and the ladyes and here frendis concentyn þerto."

[leaf 111 c]

"More Over We ben Acorded Jn fere
that kyng Loth of orcanye, that Js here,
that the dewkis dowhter he schal wedde,
and as a qwene to his lond ben ledde."

and supported by king Loth of Orkney.

thanne answered kyng loth ageyn,
and seide to hem there ful pleyn:
"Sires, non thing scholen 3e bydden me do,
that j wele gladlich concentyn þerto,
So that to the kynges honour it be
oþer profyt to his crowne, certeynle!"

The duchess's people

thanne Spak vlphin to þe toþer partye,
that on þe ladyes Side weren, trewelye,
wheche weren ferst pytows & of hevy chere,

weep for joy,

and aftyr for joye they wepten there.
and the same that answerede vlphyn thore,
vnnethe myhte speken, he wepte so sore,

praise the amends,

and seide þat þer was neuere kyng ne kayser
That bettere amendis Myhte Maken ther.
thanne wente the cownseil and þe lady jn fere,
and amonges hem they seiden there
that ther was neuere non Erthly Man

and extol the king's justice and truth.

that bettere amendis myht Maken than.
"For so just and trewe we knowen þe kyng,

that we welen acordyn to this Endyng!"
and thus thanne was knyt vpe the pes
on bothe p*ar*tyes there, with-owten les.
thus wedded vter pendragown
Ygwerne, as tho was Resown,
Evene vppon þe twentythe day
afte*r* that w*ith* Ygwerne jn hire chambre he lay.
and Ek the same day j-wedded was there
kyng loth of orcanye with Merye chere;
and vnder on feste bothe were*n* they holde
with Manye knyhtes bothe worthy and bolde.

The two royal weddings take place on the 20th day after the king's nightly visit at Tyndagel.

Thanne thus the kyng Ygwerne hadde,
and to bedde with hym was ladde—
Tyl that sche barnesched wondir faste.
so that þe kyng hire axede atte laste,
and a Nyht, as the kyng be hire lay,
there thus to Ygwerne he gan to say:
"hos is this child, My lady Milde,
that 3e gon with so grete with childe?
For Myn 3e knowe*n* May jt not be,
Sethen j 3ow weddede, ful sikerle;
For jn scripture J-put it Js,
as often as J 3ow knew, j-wys.
And with the dewk w*ith* childe not 3e be,
For hym Syen 3e not, ful Sikerle,
Many day to-forn that he ded was;
with 3ow ne cam he jn non plas."
and thus the kyng hire chalanged tho,
whiche browht Ygwerne jn Mochel wo.
so there anon, ful sore wepyngge,
answerede Igwerne to the kynge:
"Non lesyng Schal j Maken, Sekerle,
what so Evere that 3e don by Me;
and that on Me 3e haven Mercye,
For sekerly j ne Schal not lye;
and More over forto Ensuren Me
that 3e Me Refusen Jn Non degre!"
"seyth on," thanne quod the kyng,
"and j wyle graun*ten* 3ow 3oure askyng;

When Ygwern's condition begins to be noticeable, the king says to her:

"Whose is this child?

It cannot be mine,

nor yet the duke's."

Ygwern weeps,

declares that she will tell the truth,

and implores his mercy.

The king promises Ygwern not to reject her.

so what so Evere that ȝe me telle,
For nothing ȝow Forsaken j Nylle."
Anon whanne that Ygwerne herde this,
Ful joyful thanne was sche, j-wys.
" Sire, of merveilles J schal ȝow seyn,
and the sothe tellen ȝow ful pleyn!"

[leaf 111 *d*] Ygwern tells of the nightly visit

Thanne Anon gan sche to telle
how that aventure be hyre gan falle.
sche seide, a man, with-owten variaunce,
to hire cam Jn hire lordis Semblaunce,
And with hym tweyne of his knyhtes
Jn here owne Semblaunce owt-ryhtes—
"jn whiche of alle men lyvenge

In her bedroom.

my lord thanne trosted ouer alle thynge.
and so jnto my chambre Entred he,
that al my meyne it dyde þere se.
And so with me he lay that nyht,
For my lord j wende it hadde ben ryht.
So that Nyht conceyved J was
with this child, swich was my gras;
and that same nyht my lord was slayn,
This wot J wel, Sire kyng, certayn."

The king requests her to keep the matter quiet,

thanne, whanne the kyng herde hire so telle,
anon to hire he seyde ful snelle:
" loke that ȝe kepen this preve
From alle the peple jn cristiente.
and ȝif that ȝe that thing discure,
to ȝow it is schame, J ȝow Enswre.
For wel ȝe knowen, ȝoure lordis jt nys,
ne myn nethyr, with-owten mys.

and to let him have the child, as soon as it is born.

Therfore J preye ȝow, graunt it to me,
anon as hit is j-born of the;
and that ȝe wolde don my comandement,
To deliueren hit to whom þat me list, verament."
" Sire," quod thanne this lady so fre,
" what Evere ȝow list, ȝe mown do be me,
and of me haven al ȝowre wylle,
what that Evere ȝe seyn me vntylle!"

6163. *variaũce*, the second *a* through correction, large.
6175. *lord* corrected afterwards from *lor'*.

On the morwe tolde the kyng vlphyn anon
of alle these materis, how it dyde gon.

The king tells Ulfin.

Thanne answerede vlphyn to the kyng:
"now mowen ȝe knowen Jn alle thing
that ȝowre qweene is bothe trewe and wys,
for of erthly wo*m*men sche berith the pris.
now wete ȝe wel sche doth not lye,
Ne no*n* blawndise Jn hire ko*n*ne ȝe spye.
and þer*to* hauen ȝe wel sped the nede
that ȝe hyhte mer*l*yne Jn othir stede,
that thike same child he scholde have,
were Jt a maide*n* oþer were Jt knave."
So Jnto vj mownthis Jt abod stylle,
Tyl that merlyne cam vlphyn vntylle,
and with vlphyn spak Jn prevyte
of swiche thinges as desirede he.
thanne desirede mer*l*yne ouer al thyng,
er þat he wente, to speken *with* the kyng.
And wha*n*ne asembled they weren Jn fere,
tha*n*ne tolde the kyng Jn his manere
to merlyne the wordis of the qweene,
and what resou*n*s betwene hem hadde bene.
thanne answered mer*l*yne anon ageyn
To the kyng there, Jn certeyn,
& saide þat—"vlphyn hath wel agreed þe pes
of the dewkis deth, with-owten les;
but of my gylte am j not clere,
that j hire deseyvede Jn swich manere,
and wot Neuere hos that child Js
with wheche sche goth, with-owte*n* mys!"
thanne seide the kyng: "ful Sykerle,
Mer*l*yne, J wot, so wys that ȝe be,
that ȝow ȝe welen aqwyten ful wel;
this knowe j sekerlych everydel."
"ȝe mosten me helpe," quod mer*l*yne, "þerto!"
þe kyng seide: "gladliche that wyl j do,
for wel wot j the child moste ben ȝoure,
hit Forto Norsche and to socowre."
Anon spak mer*l*yne to the kyng than:

Ulfin praises the truthfulness and wisdom of the queen,

and the prudent measure taken by the king.

After six months, Merlin comes to Ulfin

and to the king.

Merlin is satisfied with what has been done, so far,

but wishes to expiate his own accompliceship in the deceiving of the lady,

and desires the king's aid to that end.

[leaf 112 *a*] "There is in this country," says Merlin, "a passing good man (called Antron, l. 6520, or Ankor, l. 6472), with an excellent wife.

"Jn this contre there Js A passing good man, 6232
on the beste of thy region here,
and therto a good woman to his fere,
the wisest and the moste discreet,
For of alle vertwes sche is repleet. 6236
but hire lord js not þe moste richest man,
therefore, sire kyng, not forthan

Send for the man, and give him of your goods, that his wife, who has just had a son, may take your child,

J wolde that ȝe aftyr hym sente,
and of ȝowre goodis him ȝeven, veramente! 6240
For his wyf jn gesyne doth lye
of a knave child, sire, ful Sekerlye
and that ȝe myhten him so plese,
that jn tyme comeng he myhte ȝow ese 6244
this child to kepe and to norrye,
that hym deliuered schal ben, sekerlye,
and þat his wyves mylk Sowkyn hit may,

and send her own out to be nursed by another woman."

and hire owne child to ben put away 6248
Forto sowken Som othyr woman."
thus seide merlyne to the kyng than.
thanne anon to merlyne seide the kyng:
"As thow wylt, hit schal ben Jn alle thyng! 6252
thanne merlyne, his leve he took anon,
and to blayse his maister he gan to gon.

The king sends for the man,

and the kyng sente aftyr this good man,
lyk as this Storye tellen ȝow kan. 6256
So whanne this goodman to cowrt was gon,
the kyng, with hym there mette he anon,

welcomes him heartily,

and with hym gret Joye gan make,
where-offen merveille þe good man gan take, 6260
that the kyng of hym so mochel made,
and why that with hym he was so glade.

and says: "I must tell thee a great secret,

"Now, goode dere frend," quod the kyng,
"Herkene now to myn talkyng. 6264
Nedis j moste discoveren to the
a thing that Js of gret prevyte:
of an aventure þat js me befalle,
J schal the tellen ende and alle. 6268
and as thow art my lige man,

for I want thy help

So be myn helpe Jn that thou kan,

6244. MS. *comēng*.

and conseyl to kepen hit to 3owre powere,
and it neuere discuren fer ne nere!"
To the kyng thanne seide this good man tho:
"Sire, 3owre comaundement schal j do,
and to my powere hit fulfille,
what so evere 3e sein me vntylle."
"Thus me dremede this oþer nyht,"
Seyde the kyng thanne to this knyht,
"that thow were one the goode man
whiche is dwellyng jn my kyngdam.
And so me thowhte on cam to me,
and merveilles me tolde, certeynle:
Ferst that to me 3e been trewe lige man,
and that a child on 3owre wif engendred 3e han,
the whiche child, J-born it Js,
as he me tolde, with-owten mys.
So that man comaunded me
þat jn alle wyse J scholde preyen the
that thy chyld owt scholdest þou do
To som oþer womman and norschen it so.
And thy wyf anothir child kepen scholde,
and there-with to have plente of golde,
the wheche child to hire schal ben browht;
but there-offen the peple may weten nowht.
Now do this, bewsire, j preye to the,
and ful wel thy mede j-qwyt schal be!"

and thy discretion.

I dreamt the other night that thou art a very good man,

and that thy wife has just had a child.

Thou wert to send thy own child away,

and let thy wife take another child instead, which will be brought to her."

Whanne that the goodman herde this,
anon to þe kyng he answerede, j-wys:
"of a wondyr thyng 3e axen me,
that me semeth a3ens nature scholde be,
my chyld to Sowken ony oþer womman
but his owne modyr that bar hym than.
3yt Nevertheles, Sire, this Wyle J do:
asayen 3if þat my wyf concente þerto.
And 3it of on thing J wolde 3ow preye:
whanne þat child scholde be born, me for to seye,
and whanne Jt scholde be browht to me;
of this wolde J knowen the certeinte."

The man replies that it seems a wonderful thing,

[leaf 112 b] but says he will speak to his wife,

and inquires when it is to be.

6289. MS. þ^t *owt do*, with *owt* crossed out afterwards.

The king can give no particulars,

than answerede the kyng ful snelle :
" sire, thereoffen the sope can j not telle."
Anon answerede azen this good man,
and to the kyng there seide he than :
" what thing jn this world 3e comaunden me,
J wyle it don, that may plesen the !"

but makes fine presents.

thanne 3af hym the kyng gret 3iftes thore,
For whiche this goodman abascht hym ryht sore.

The man goes home.

And hom to his wyf he goth ageyn,
and of alle this mater telleth hire ful pleyn,

His wife likewise finds the demand strange.

whiche sche jt thowhte a straunge thyng :
hire owne child owt to putten jn Norscheng,
and sche anothir child to susteyne & fynde ;
this thowhte þe lady it were azens kynde.

But the man urges their duty to their king,

thanne answerede this goodman ful mildely,
and seide to his wyf, that was hym by :
" there is non thyng that longeth hym to,
but nedis for owre lord we mosten Jt do.

also the king's presents

and þerto so moche tresor and Fe
he hath vs 3oven, dame, certeynle.

and promises.

More ouer vs hath he behoten to do
what thyng that vs behoveth also.
and þerfore j wele that we fulfylle
Jn alle thinges the kynges wylle.
and 3it more ouer j wyle also
that certeyn, wyf, 3e concenten herto !"
thanne answerede anon this goode womman,
and to hire lord & souerayn seide sche than :

The wife submits implicitly,

" My sovereyn," sche seide, " 3owre owne am J,
and so Js also this chyld, trewly,
and there-fore with vs do 3e 3owre wylle,
For 3owre comaundement am j redy to fulfille.
for on thing J hote 3ow now certeinle :
azens 3owre wille schal j neuere be,
as ferforth as j have wyt oþer konnenge !"
thanne reioysched this goodman Jn alle thynge,

and they make preparations for receiving the child.

and preyde his wyf ful tendirlye
that a norse to geten hire Jn hye
here child to norschen with honour,
So that he myhte kepen both tyme & owr,

that whanne the tothir to hym were sent,
he redy to ben *pur*veyed, verament.
thus this goodman tha*n*ne p*ur*veyed was
his child to ben norsched Jn honest plas.
And also the kyng Sawgh be his qwene
that hire delyveraunce sone scholde bene.
And also the day to-forn hire chyldyng
thedyr cam Mer*l*yn, with-owten lesyng,
and prevyliche spak with vlphyn there,
and to hym seyde Jn this manere:
"vlphyn, J alowe ful mochel the kyng,
that so wysly hath ordeyned for this thing."
And thanne to the qweene he bad hym go,
& not to taryen, w*ith*-owten wordis mo,
there to ȝeven warne*n*g of hire childyng
and ek of hire delyveraun*c*e, w*ith*-owte*n* lesyng,
that Sekerly deliue*r*ed scholde sche be
on the morwe*n* aftyr mydnyht—"as j telle the;
ek that thow comau*n*de that lady so bryht
that child to deliue*r*en anon ryht
To the ferst man that they konne*n* fynde
atte the halle dore there stondynge."
And wha*n*ne vlphyn herde hym speken so,
Ful sone axede of hym vlphyn tho:
"Wylt thow not spekyn With the kyng?"
"No, sire," quod Mer*l*yne, "with-owten lesyng!"
Anon to the kyng vlphyn cam tho,
and hym tolde how Mer*l*yne wolde do.
Anon as the kyng herde this,
wel mochel joye he hadde, j-wys.
"Ne wyl not Merlyne with me speke,
Er from this cowrt that he gy*n*ne reke?"
thanne answerede vlphyn to hym ageyn,
and seide: "sire kyng, no, Jn certeyn;
but doth as he hath comanded ȝow,
For it wil torne*n* to ȝoure prow!"
Anon the kyng cam to the qwene,
and of p*r*evyte spak hem betwene:
"dame, of on thyng J schal warne*n* the:
that myn comandeme*n*t fulfyllen ȝe."

The queen's time draws near.

Merlin comes to Ulfin,

and wishes the queen to know that she shall be delivered next day, after mid-night,

and that she must hand over the child to the first man found at the hall door.

[leaf 112 c]

Ulfin informs the king.

The king speaks to his spouse.

"worthy lord," quod the qwene tho,
"3oure comaundement now wyl j do."

The king repeats Merlin's prediction

"To MORWEN aftyr the MYDNYHT,
be the helpe of god almyht,
thanne delyuered scholen 3e be,
as j 3ow seye now Sykerle.
and of on thing J 3ow preye:

and command,

that whanne Jt is born, be ony weye
To on of 3owre prevyest wommen
that anon hyt be delyvered then,
and that sche take that chyld so kynde
To the ferste MAN that sche doth fynde;

and enjoins secrecy,

and that 3e comaunden that persone
that thedyr with that child doth gone,
that sche 3ow discure jn non degre,
how that of chyld deliuered 3e be.

to keep people from talking.

For thanne the peple wolde seyn
Jt were neuere MYN, Jn certeyn;
No more it were lyk so forto be,
Faire lady, sethen that j wedded the."
"Sire kyng," quod this lady thanne,
"Ho hit ENGENDRED, j not what MANNE;

The queen promises to obey.

þerfore wyl j don 3owre comandement,
as womman that is schamed, verament,
of the grete MIS-AVENTURE
that to me is happed, j 3ow ENSURE.

She wonders, however, at the king knowing so well of her delivery.

but of on thyng sore wondryth ME:
to myn deliueraunce 3e ben so preve."
"NOW j 3ow preye," quod þe kyng tho,
"algates MY comandement that 3e do."
"3is, worthy lord, with-owten stryf,
3if so be þat god graunte ME lyf!"

Thus departyd bothe kyng and qwene
of the conseyl that was hem be-twene,
and the qweene abod þere goddis grace.

Next evening, the queen feels the throes.

So that on the MORWEN, jn that place,
at EVENSONG tyme of the belle,
jn hire wombe felte sche throwes ful snelle,
and travailled forth al that NYHT

jnto þat owr as the kyng tolde hire ryht.
so that be goddis helpe delyuered sche was
aftyr midnyht, as happed the cas.
And anon as that child was þere bore,
a prevy womman clepyd sche to hire thore,
and Seide: "com hydyr, my dere frend,
do take this child bothe Faire and hend,
and bere Jt to the halle dore anon,
and there a man schole ȝe fynden son.
For what man so evere he be,
this child hym deliuere, j preye the.
And that man that ȝe wel beholde,
Of What manere of kynde He ben scholde.
goth now and doth as J ȝow preye!"
"ȝis, Sikyr, lady!" this womman gan seye.
this womman took that child anon,
and jnto riche clothes sche dede it don,
and so browht hit to the halle dore,
where as a ful old man fond sche thore,
that onlovely was of Face & lere,
and seide: "Sire, what bydest thou here?"
"J abyde that thou hast me browht,
For ellis hydyr hadde j comen nowht."
"what answere schal j ȝeven my lady so dere,
to whom j have be-taken hire child here?"
thanne answerede hire this old man tho:
"what that j am, hast thou not to do,
but do that thou comaunded were:
deliuere me the chyld þat thow hast þere!"
thanne took sche hym this chyld anon,
and thussone from hire was he gon,
that sche ne wyst jnto whiche plase.
tho aȝen sche wente as comen sche wase,
and tolde the lady bothe word and ende,
how sche hadde delyverid þat chyld so hende
To ryht a passyng ful old man—
"but what he was, telle j ne can,
For as sone as the child he nam,
Syker, j ne wyste where he becam."
thanne was the qwene of hevy chere,

6428 After midnight the child is born.
6432 The queen tells a woman
to take the child to the hall door, hand it over
6436 to the man whom she shall meet there,
and notice carefully
6440 [leaf 112 *d*] what kind of a man he is.
The woman
6444 obeys.
At the door she finds an ugly old man (Merlin),
6448 who says he is waiting for what she brings.
6452
He refuses to give further information,
6456
and disappears with the child.
6460 The woman returns to the queen and tells her what has happened.
6464
The queen is sad.

and fulsore Mornede & wepte there. 6468

Merlin goes with the child to its intended foster-father, Ankor (or Antron),

but he that the chyld hadde tho,
ful faste jn his weye he gan to go,
Tyl that he cam to this good Man,
that Ankor there was clepyd than. 6472

who is just on his way to mass.

And as to Masse ward as he wente,
God to Serven with good Entente,

Merlin appears to Ankor in another shape: that of a nice old man.

thanne took Merlyne a-nothyr Semblaunce,
of a fayr old Man, with-owten variaunce. 6476
Thanne clepyd Merlyne that good Man þere,
and seide: "Ankor, com speke with me here."
"j come to 3ow," quod Ankor tho,
"with good wille to speken 3ow vnto." 6480

He gives him the child,

quod þis old Man: "j have þe browht a chyld,
whiche that Js bothen Mek and Myld;

asks him to keep it well,

and that thow it kepe as Richely
and as thin owne þou wost don tendirly. 6484
loke that 3e don as j 3ow say,

and promises him great rewards.

and gret profyt schalt þou hauen, with-owten delay,
and Ek thyn Eyres Encresyd scholen be,
as j the Seye, Sire, ful certeinle." 6488

Ankor understands that the child is the one spoken of by the king.

"A," quod Ankor, "j trowe this be he
that the kyng spak offen to Me."
"So is hit, Ankor, with-owten faylle,
as j the here telle jn consaylle, 6492
For hit js the preyere of the kyng
and of goode ladyes, with-owten lesyng."
thanne took Ankor this chyld so fre,
thát was so 3ong and ful of bewte, 6496
and axede of this old Man there
3if that this child owht crystened were.

Merlin tells Ankor to have it christened,

"Nay, but do thow it cristene anon
jn this Mynstre, Er thou ferthere gon." 6500
thanne axede Ankor of hym tho
what Name he scholde 3even hym vnto.

and to call it Arthur.

"Nemne hym Arthewr, j preye to the;
For mochel worschepe by hym schalt þou se 6504
and ful gret Encres to the and thyne,
and thow hit worschepe & hit propyne.

[leaf 113 *a*] So thanne vnnethis schalt thou knowe

Whethyr þou love him bettere oþer thyn owne."
thanne axede Ankor of this good man
what he was, and whennes þat he cam—
"And whom schal j sey that this child took me?
of this, leve Sire, now preye j the."
thanne answerede this olde man ageyn:
"of me ne knowest thow no more, certeyn!"
and so departyd they asondyr ryht tho;
thanne eche Jn his weye forth gan to go.
So that Ankor cristenede that child anon,
and Arthewr him clepyd þere thus son.
This man that Ankor here j-clepyd Js,
his propre name Js Antron, with-owten mys.
thanne Antron to his wyf hyede ful faste
(that child hire to brynge hadde he gret haste),
and seide: "dere wif, lo, this chyld here
of which to 3ow j spak Thanne ere!"
thanne answerede this goode lady anon:
"To me, Sire, hit is ryht welcom."
Anon this faire chyld took sche there,
and axede 3if hit cristened were.
he seide: "3e, dame," thanne, "certeinly!"
thanne took sche the child and leide it hire by,
and dyde hit Sowken of hire pappe anon,
& hire owne to norrye putte owt thus son.
thanne longe aftyr lyvede vter pendragon
with reste and pes Jn that regyown.
So atte laste thanne hit be-fylle
that the gowte cam hym vntylle,
and hym held bothen Jn hondis and feet,
So þat be non wyse hit nolde hym leet;
Jn whiche mene while, as j 3ow say,
his enemyes vp aryveden on a day,
and jn his lond dyden gret owtrage
and ek to his peple ful gret damage.
thanne sente the kyng to his barowns anon,
and cownseilled with hem everychon,
preyeng hem with al his myht

Ankor asks Merlin who he is.

Merlin gives no information about himself.

The child is christened,

taken to Ankor's home,

and well received by his wife.

After this, king Uter lives happily for several years. Eventually, he gets the gout,

and is attacked by enemies.

He summons his barons.

6515. *so*, MS. *se*.

hym to helpe avenge jn his ryht,
and to-gederis they wolden gon,
as trewe lordis for here kyng scholde don. 6548

The barons promise their help,

Anon they seiden, with ryht good wylle
his preyere thanne they wolde fulfylle.
thanne reden these lordis forth anon,

and encounter the enemies,

and *with* here enemyes they metten thusson, 6552
that a gret partye of the lond
they hadden j-treted jnto here hond.
thanne this meyne vppon þe kynges side
with here enemyes asembled that tyde. 6556

but are defeated.

Anon thussone j-scomfyt they were,
and mochel of here peple losten there.
whanne this bode was browht to þe kyng,

The king grieves.

thanne jn his herte made he morneng. 6560
so they that leften of the bataylle,
to the kyng they comen, with-owten faille.
and the tothir partye enforsede hem faste,
So that furthere jnto the lond ben they paste. 6564

Then Merlin arrives.

Thanne merlyne, that knew of alle this thyng,
Ful faste he hyede hym to the kyng.

The king, filled with joy and hope,

Anon as Pendragown merlyne þere say,
Ful mochel joye made he that day, 6568
and thowhte of merlyne comfort to haue,
be wheche his rem he hopede to Save.
And whanne that merlyne to-fore hym cam,

welcomes him,

anon be the hond he hym nam. 6572
thanne merlyne hym axede of his chere,
why that he thanne so hevy were—

[leaf 113 *b*]

"ȝyt Wel J Wot that syk ȝe be,
and fulsore afrayed, as thinketh me." 6576
thanne answerede Pendragoun aȝen tho:

and tells him his distress.

"merlyne, ful good encheson j haue þerto,
For myn owne men mi lond distroye,
that j wende wolden me nowht anoye, 6580
and slayn my men þere jn bataylle,
that litel j wende wolde me asaylle."

"Battle without a head cannot be," says Merlin.

"Now," quod merlyn, "here mown ȝe se
þat bataille with-owten hed may not be." 6584
"Thanne, for goddis love," quod the kyng,

"Merlyne, conseille me now of this thing!"
Anon seide Merlyne to hym ageyn: — Merlin continues:
"on thing j schal telle the for certeyn,
whiche word trewe proved schal be,
ȝif that thou now wilt leven me.
Do semblen alle thy peple anon, — "Assemble thy forces,
and that to-gederis that they fast gon.
Anon as they ben sembled jn fere,
thanne do the ordeyn an hors bere, — go with them on a horse litter,
and to bataylle with hem thou go
aȝens thyn enemyes, þat thou do so.
For wete thou now wel, jn certeyne,
hem schalt thou ouercomen, ful pleyne. — and thou shalt be victorious.
and whanne thou hast don this bataylle,
thanne scha[l]t þou wel knowen, with-owten faille,
what vaylleth the Lond þat js lordles,
whanne hit hath nede rankewr to ses.
Aȝens the Lond that hath Sovereyn,
hit lyte avaylleth, j telle the pleyn.
and whanne this bataylle thow hast j-do, — After the battle,
herk me now what j sey the vnto:
departe thy good Jn dyvers manere — distribute thy goods for the benefit of thy soul,
For thi sowle, whiles þat þou lyvest here,
and to the pore ȝyve thou thy tresor.
& why j seye, wilt thou se wherfor?
For j hit knowe wel jn my mynde
that þou myht not longe lyven be kynde. — for thou canst not live long.
therfore j wele that þou schalt knowe
of hem that grete goodis han be nowe, — Whoever leaves great riches behind,
and deyen, and leven hem behynde,
& vppon here Sowles haven [not] mynde
that to departen jn here lyvenge
to pore jn here Sowles fortherynge,
j sey, that good after here departyng,
hit nys not here, with-owten lesyng, — gives them up to persons who care but little for his soul.
but here it is, & moche more therto,
that for here sowlis litel wil do.
For wete þou wel with-owten dwere

6600. MS. *fchat.* 6616. MS. *haven mynde.*

The devil will appear to thee. He appears more particularly to rich people who do not give, while they are still alive.

that þe devel to the schal apere,
and specyaly to hem that han tresor,
that to powre wil not depart to-for,
whiles that they ben on lyve here;
hit vailleth hem not, *with*-owten dwere.
and þou that Nedis Mostest here deye,
j the warne, Sire, now certeinlye,
Thy good departe, thy soule to save,
Jn hevene blysse the joye to have.

The joy of this world is nothing.

For the joye of this world here
a3ens that js nowht, in *non* Manere.
and for why, j schal tellen to the,
3if that þou wylt now lesten to Me:

It fails.

jn this world hath *non* Man so gret joye,
that hit ne schal faylle and hym anoye;

But heavenly joy lasts.

and jn the tothir js joye Endeles,
that Evere is dureng, & schal neu*ere* ses.
and ho that disseise Suffreth here,
To him jn hevene js Restored there."

[leaf 113 c]

Each man of property must do something to earn everlasting life.

"Thanne Moste Eche Man Jn His Degre,
that God to hath graunted lond o*per* fe,
loke that he purchase Jn this lyf here
the lyf Evere lastyng Elleswhere.

All the more thou, whom God has sent so great wealth.

than thou, that hast so Mochel Richesse
of tresowr, of Goold, an of prowesse,
and al God hath sent the by grase,
bethenk the in how lytel a spase!

I have loved thee long;

J haue the loved ful Many a day,
and 3it J do, *with*-owten delay.

but who loves thee so truly as thou oughtst to love thyself?

but ho loveth the so trewelye
as thou thy-self owhtest, pleynlye?
J have the told hit vndirfonge:
aftir this victory lyvest þou not longe.

All is in vain, if the end is not good.

For alle þe thinges that þou kanst Make,
Nis but a good Ende forto take.
and thowh alle þe good þ*at* þou Myht do,
but 3if thin Ende be good therto,

6638. *ne* crossed out, but dotted underneath.

Ellis art thou Jn weye of lesyng,
Forsothe j the telle now, sire kyng.
and thowgh [thou] alle thy lyve hast lyved mys
and put thy sowle Jn gret distres,
thanne, ȝif that thyn Ende good be,
Forȝevenesse getest thou, sekerle.
Also j do the to vndirstonde
that nowht berest þou owt of thi londe—
but onliche worschepe & almesdede,
owt of thy lond schalt þou not lede.
For almesse *with*-owten worschepe do
aȝens god ne vaylleth not a slo.
Now j have declared thy lyvenge;
and thi qweene Js ded, with-owte lesenge,
and Neuere oþer schalt thou haue Non,
but whanne þou of this world dost now gon
Thy lond with-owten Eyr Most abyde.
therefore to thy-self loke at this tyde,
and loke, be thy sowle wel that thou do,
Er that this world thow passe now fro.
thus from the, Sire, wile j now gon,
For More with the have j not to don;
And Sey to vlphyn that he Me leve,
For here-aftyr he schal it preve!"
thanne vter pendragoun spak ageyn:
"Merlyne, me thowhte J herde ȝow seyn
that j jn an hors bere to ben save
aȝens Myn Enemys & victorye have.
but, Merlyne, j prey the, telle Me here
how god to ȝelden & what Manere."
"Syre, j the Sey, Make thou good Ende,
and thanne to blysse thy sowle schal wende.
Fareth wel, non lengere J tarye with the,
but after þe bataylle thou thenk on Me."
Thanne axede vter Pendragon
aftyr ȝonge arthewr, that was his son.
Thanne answered Merlyne to hym tho:
"Of hym hast thow not now forto do,

Even after a sinful life,
if the end is good, all shall be forgiven.
Nothing takest thou with thee from earth except devotion and alms-deeds.
Thy queen is dead,
thou hast no heir, therefore think of thine own soul.
Tell Ulfin to believe in me."
The king inquires further about the horse-litter,
about the good deeds he is to do,
and after his son Arthur.

6663. MS. *thowgh all.* 6668. *owt*, *t* added above the line.

Merlin tells the king that Arthur has become a handsome, well-bred young man.

For he is become a fair 3ong Man,
and Mochel Norture forsothe he kan."
Thanne axede the kyng hym hertyle
3if Evere his sone he scholde owht se.
"3e," quod Merlyne, "ones, Jn fay,
and Neuere More aftyr that day!"

After Merlin's departure,

Thus departyd Merlyne and þe kyng,
as j 3ow seye with-owten leseng.

the king summons his forces,

the kyng let Somowne his ost anon
vppon his Enemyes forto gon,

goes with them in a horse-litter,

and let hym leggen jn on hors bere,
as 3e to-fore herden telle here.
thanne there thus sembled batailles two,

[leaf 113 *d*]

And Mochel Harm Was there J-do.
So that be the cownseyl of here kyng

and wins the battle.

of here Enemyes hadden they conqweryng,
and of hem Slowen ful gret plente,
that ful gret deol it was to Se;
And the Rem was set Jn Reste and pes,
& Neuere aftyr jn his tyme non distres.
thanne thowhte the kyng of Merlynes Sawe,
that to the deth ward scholde he drawe.

He then goes to London,

Anon faste to Londone he gan hye,
and sente aftyr his Tresorye,

and distributes his goods amongst the poor,

and jn his Rewm he delt jt faste,
whiles his lif Jn Erthe dyde laste,
and gret almesse to powre dyde he
with his owne hondis, Ful Sykerle.

and by the advice of Holy Church,

and the Remnawnt of vn-Mevable good
that jn his Lond bothe lay and stood,
aftyr the cownseille of holy chirche
he hit disposede, there-with to wirche.
and thus his good departyd the kyng,

keeping nothing for himself.

that to hym-Self he lefte non thyng
where-offen he Myhte haven Remembraunce,
that he Jt ne delte (swich was his chaunce)
For the love of god & his Modyr dere
Be Merlynes cownseyl Jn this Manere.

Fvl meek and bonewre was the kyng
aȝens god and the world, *with*-owt*en* lesyng;
and also to the peple of holy chirche
Evere ful humbely can he wirche.
So that thus longe Syk he lay,
Tyl that hit happede vppon a day
that al his peple j-sembled were
at the cyte of londone alle jn fere,
and for his deth made gret morneng,
that so sone deyen scholde the kyng—
For they knewe*n* wel, ful certeynlye,
That Nedis the kyng moste dye,
For of thre dayes he ne spak
To hem no*n* word, with-owten lak—
Thanne cam Merlyne thedyr anon,
that alle these thynges knew Echon.
thanne come*n* they to Merlyn alle,
and tolden hym how it was befalle,
& how that the kyng was ded,
thus they hym tolde Jn that sted—
"whiche that ȝe loveden so wel,
and ek to ȝow was so good and lel."
"ȝe seyn not wel," quod *Mer*lyne thanne,
"He ne may not deyen, so good a manne,
That so good Ende here doth make,
and so moche deleth for goddis Sake.
Ne*þer* hym-self nys not ȝit ded,
al-thowgh he seme as blw as led."
Thanne they hym tolde *þat*—"he ne spak
thre dayes non word, with-owte lak,
Ne neu*ere* schal speke*n* jn this world!"
thus to *Mer*lyne seide*n* they with on acord.
thanne seide Merlyne: "be goddis myht
J hym schal don speken this nyht.
Cometh now on, and Seweth me,
and hym speken scholen ȝe here*n* and se."
"thanne js hit the grettest merveille
that Evere we Syen, with-owte*n* faylle!"
that jnto the chambre gonne*n* they gon,
and opened the wyndowes Everychon.

The king is long sick.

His people are assembled about him.

When he has lain speechless for three days, Merlin arrives.

The people say to him that the king is dead.

But Merlin replies: "A man who has done so much good, cannot die.

And king Uter is not dead."

The people say that the king cannot speak.

Merlin replies that they shall hear him speak once more.

They all go into his room.

The people inform the dying king that Merlin [leaf 114 *a*] has come.

thanne seiden they to the kyng Jn fere:
"Lo, Sire, Merlyne Js comen to 3ow here,
That 3e Weren Wonted to loven so Wel,
and he hath 3ow hit qwyt Every del."

The king recognises him.

thanne to hymward tornede the kyng
with al his strengthe and his konneng,
and contenaunce Made there to Merlyne,
so that he hym knew ful wel a[nd] fyne.

Merlin asks the people to draw close to the bed-side.

thanne spak Merlyne to the peple anon,
bothe to temperal & sperítwal Everichon,
and seide: "Sires, draweth 3ow now Nere
that desiren 3owre kyng to speken to here."
thanne axeden they Merlyne howhe that myhte be.
"Cometh," quod Merlyne, "and stondyth be Me!"

Merlin whispers into the king's ear:

Thanne wente Merlyne to the beddis hed,
and there to the kyng spak Jn that sted,
Softely Rowneng Jn the kynges Ere:

"Sire, a fair end hast thou made.

"Sire, a fair Ende hast thow Mad here,
3if hit Jn thy conciense now be
as thy Semblaunce here scheweth to Me.
And on thyng J telle the Jn certeyne:

After thee shall reign Arthur, thy son,

that be goddis grace aftyr the schal Regne
Arthewr, that Js thy sone so fre;
of al this Rewm kyng schal he be,

and he shall fill the round table."

and he schal fulfylle the table Rownde,
whiche that be the now Js here fownde."

The king turns round, and asks them all to pray for him.

And whanne the kyng herde this,
Ful sone to hym ward he torned, j-wys,
and preide the peple Everychon
To God alle for hym to preyen anon.
thanne seide Merlyne anon with-al:
"this þe laste word that Evere speken he schal!"
thanne wondreden alle that weren there,
how that he spak Jn Swich Manere.

The same night, the king dies.

And so that Nyht he Made his Ende,
& to hevene blysse his Sowle gan wende.
Anon alle the prelacye of that lond

6784. MS. *afyne*.

with alle the Baronage, as j vndirstond,
jn the Most worschepful and Reverent Gyse
they hym beryeden as they cowde devyse.
So was that lond with-owten Eyr.
And on the Morewen to-gederys the[y] gonne Repeir,
of holy chirche al the prelacye
and alle the Baronage, with-owten lye,
Jn a paleys that cristene hyhte;
there sembleden bothe clerk & knyhte,
and token cownseyl hem be-twene
how that the peple Governed schold bene,
but Jn non wyse acorden they Myhte.
thanne be-spak a ful gentyl knyhte:
"let vs alle be comowne asent
clepen Merlyne to cownseyl, þat js present;
For he Js bothen wis and Ek Redy
Good cownseil to ȝeven vs, trewely!"
So that thus acordid they alle jn fere,
and aftyr Merlyne anon senten there.

The king is buried.

Next morning, the prelates and the barons assemble to choose a successor,

but cannot agree.

They then resolve to send for Merlin.

Chap. VI.

Whanne that Merlyne to-forn hem comen was,
to hym they seyden there jn that plas:
"For a wis Man, Sire, we the knowe,
and oure kyng hast thou loved a gret throwe.
Ek therto, Sire, thou knowest Ryht wel
that Governour han we neuere a del.
For a lond with-owten Governour
May not Endurен ajens ony schowr.
wherfore, sire Merlyne, we the preye,
al this hol cownseille, Sire, Jn feye,
vs to chesen swich a governowr
the prelacye to plesen, the Rem to honour,
and jn Savacyoun of the peple also!"
Anon thanne Merlyne spak hem vnto:
"J Nam not worthy Jn Non degre
Non swich Maner thing to taken on Me,
Nethir non Governowr forto chese,
but be my wyt J schal don ȝow Ese,

Merlin arrives before the assembly,

and is requested to find them a king.

He modestly promises to give them his advice. [leaf 114.]

6818. MS. *the*.

3if that 3e wilen acorden to me;
herketh now what my cownseil schal be!"
All declare they will follow Merlin's advice. they seiden to hym the[y] wolden asente,
alle the hole cownseyl, veramente.
"This rewm J have loved," quod merlyn,
"and ek al the peple that Js there-Jn.
3e knowen ful wel al jn fere
"Your king died at Martinmas," says Merlin. that 3owre kyng now ded Js here,
which deide atte qwyn3yme of seint martyn
this knowen 3e alle wel and fyn.
"Christmas is coming, And hennes Jnto cristemasse
we ne haven but ryht a schort spasse.
and 3if 3e wilen don aftyr my cownsaille,
and I will tell you what to do. J schal 3ow Seyen, with-owten faylle,
God to worschepen, the world to plese,
and to 3owre hertes bothe joye and ese."
thanne seiden they alle to hym ageyn,
to hym they wolden concenten, certeyn.
"3e vndirstondyn alle ful wel
At Christmas our Lord was born. that now cometh the feste of nowel,
jn whiche the goode Lord was bore,
that savede hem þat weren forlore.
and as he Js lord over alle thyng,
ek aboven alle oþer he is kyng;
and as verrayly as a maiden hym bere,
of good cownceylle preye 3e him here!
If you pray to Him, with good and humble hearts, For j dar be borewgh, and 3e him preye
jn this manere as j 3ow seye,
and that eche man preye jn his degre
with good herte and jn hvmylyte:
lik as he was born Jn this feste,
to hear your prayers 3owre preieris to heren, of mest and leste,
and as kyng of kynges he was bore,
3oure Symple preieris to heren thore,
and as of alle thynges he is governour,
and to give you a king by some token, 3ow a kyng to chesen of honowr,
that at this Feste chosen myhte be
be som tokeneng that they myhten se,

6853. MS. *the.*

the peple to governe and god to plese,
and Ek the Rem to setten Jn Ese,
So that the peple knewen aryhte
that the Lecciown were be goddis Myhte—
and 3if 3e wylen don as J 3ow seye,
Som tokeneng scholen 3e haven, certeinleye!"
thanne seiden they, so god hem Save,
Jt was the beste cownseil that they myhten have—
"For there Nys non Man Erthliche bore
that bettyr cownseille myhte 3even þerfore."
thanne alle the clergyse there anon
thorwgh the Rewm dyde Notyse thus son
that Jn Every chirche and abbeye
bothe Riche and powre scholden preye,
what thorwgh here preyere and holychirche,
God to hem Som Miracle scholde werche.
herto acordid they al jn fere,
and Merlyne of hem his leve took þere
Jnto othir contres forto gon.
thanne axeden they Merlyne anon
3if that this thyng trewe scholde be.
"3e, j hope," quod Merlyne, "Sykerle!
For no More Nyle j comen 3ow to,
Tyl that the Elecciown be j-do."
thanne wente Merlyne to blayse jn haste,
and of these Merveilles told hym faste;
And of thinges that to comen Were,
To his Maystir Blasye tolde he there.
and thereby haven we now knowenge
of alle these Materis, with-owten varyenge.
thanne anon alle the Barownye
and also forth-with the clergye
To Londone wenten al jn fere
there forto Maken here preyere,
and there abyden jnto cristemasse
jn here preyeris, bothe More & lasse.
And Antron, that Norsched hadde Arthowr,
atte halwentyd with gret honour

you certainly shall have such a token."

The clergy ordain prayers throughout the kingdom.

Then Merlin takes leave.

Merlin goes to Blasy.

[leaf 114*c*]

The barons and the prelates go to London

for Christmas.

6891. MS. *knowē Myhte aryhte*, with *o* corrected into *e*, and *Myhte* crossed out.

Antron, who has had his son (Kay) knighted at All-Hallows,

his owne sone let dubben a knyht.
and Arthewr was woxen bothe strong & wyht,
and was past Sevene 3er old,
Ek þerto was he bothe wyhte and bold;
and his owne Sone he dide hym calle,
For so wende Arthewr it hadde befalle,
and that his fadyr he hadde j-be,
& thus wende Arthewr, ful sikerle.

also goes to London with his children.

So that Antron to Londone gan go,
and with hym his children bothe two.

On Christmas eve, there is a large congregation,

Thanne vppon the Even of cristemasse
there sembled the peple More and lasse,
bothe the clergye and the baronage
and Manye a man of hygh parage,
to fulfille Merlynes comaundement,
that he hem bad with good Entent.
For but Symple lif ledden they there,

praying steadfastly to God for a ruler.

and fulstedfast weren jn here preyere
To God for swich a governour
the cristene to defende Jn Eueri schowr
and cristes lawe to Meingteigne,
The lond to Goverue and to susteigne.
And thus abyden they, tyl Masse was don,
gret Multitude of peple and Manion.

Some, however, consider such prayers foolish.

And Some seiden that Folys they were
Swich Maner of preieris to Makyn there.
"what, wene 3e," quod somme, "that God almyht
here kyng to chesen down wolde alyht?
lo, these folis wenen for here preiere
be Miracle a kyng to hauen here!"
thus the Masse there gan he Synge,
a ful holy man, wel faste preyenge.

Before mass, a holy man addresses the people: "You are assembled here

and 3it Er that he the Masse bigan,
To alle that peple spak he than:
"Here Jn this plase assembled 3e ben
For thre Skelis, as 3e schole Sen,
and for 3oure profyt Everywhare,

for the weal of your souls,

and which they ben, J schal 3ow declare:
Ferst for the hele of 3oure sowles alle,

and aftyr for ȝoure worschepe, how so befalle,
The thrydde to knowe*n* oure Lordis Myht,
that God to ȝow wile schewe*n* be Ryht
of the Eleccyown of oure kyng,
thys to sen be ȝoure preyeng,
which schal ben ȝoure gouernowr and lord
and holy chirche to sosteyne in good acord,
which to vs alle it is Sustenaunce
and vs defendith from Manye hard chaunce.
Now sethen we ben alle Ensemblyd here
a kyng to chesin Jn this Manere
of on of ȝow, which so thát it be,
but so wise be ȝe not in non degre
to knowe*n* whiche were most p*ro*fytable
owþ*er* this lond to gouerne most were able,
and for that we ben Jn nown certein,
þ*er*fore to crist let vs preye*n*, ful pleyn,
that is of alle kyngges the kyng,
so that vs graunte Owre preieng,
Swich A Governowr that We Haue
Oure londes to Meinteigne and to Save!"
and thus diden the peple, with-owten faille,
lik as this goode Man hem dide cownsaille.
thanne to Masse wente he forth anon,
also Faste as he Myhte gon,
tyl that the Masse was atte Gospel,
and aftyr they offreden wel and lel,
and owt of the chirche thei gonne to isswe
Jnto a voide place, this was ful trewe.
and be that tyme the day gan dawe,
where-offen the peple was Ryht fawe.
Anon the peple of this Rowte
Ful besyly Lokeden hem abowte,
and behelden where that a foure-qwartered ston
that there lay toforn hem Echon.
but of what Maner ston that hit was,
there knew no Man Jn that plas.
Somme there seiden hit was Marbil gray,
and somme seiden oþ*er*wise, with-owten delay.

for the worship of God,

and for the election of a king.

Now, since we are to make this election,

and because our own wisdom is insufficient,

let us pray to Christ!"

[leaf 114 *d*]

The people pray,

attend mass,

and issue out of church at dawn.

Outside, they behold a square stone of unknown description.

In the middle of the stone is an anvil,

and in þe Middis of this ston behelden they tho
a m*er*veillous Stythy, with-owten Mo,
as thowgh a smythis Styth it were,
half a foote of heythe, with-owt*en* dwere.

in the middle of the anvil is fixed a sword.

and jn þe Middis of this Styhthy þ*er* was
a Fayr Swerd pyhte Jn that plas
thorwgh the Stythy Jnto the harde ston,
that they hit Syen there Everychon.

Those who first behold this sight,

And wha*n*ne that they beheldyn this
that owt of þe Minstr*e* ferst wente, j-wis,

return into the cathedral, and tell the archbishop.

Jnto the Minstre they Entred thanne,
and tolde hit anon to this holy Manne
that here Masse gan to Synge,
which was Erchebischop*e*, with-out*en* lesinge,
Of Orbrice, as tellith this storye,
and as hit is put into Memorye.
and wha*n*ne that the holy Man herde of this,

The archbishop takes holy water, goes to the stone, bows down devoutly, and discovers a golden inscription,

anon holywater tha*n*ne took he, j-wys,
and wente to the swerd *with*-jnne a throwe,
and therto obeysched hym wondirly lowe;
where as lettres of gold beheld he there,
that Jn this Manere Endyted were,
and seiden openliche declarenge:

to the effect that he who can draw out the sword, shall be king.

that swich a man schold ben here kynge
that owt of þe stethy the swerd myhte drawe,
he scholde be governo*ur* of lond and lawe;
For God wyle that hit so now be,
as schewyth be Miracle, & no*n* but he.

The archbishop tells the people.

and thanne this Erchebischop*e* anon
among*es* the peple schewid it thus son.

Ten laymen and five clerks are set to watch the stone.

thussone this ston Jn warde was pyt
of x worthy men, to kepen hyt,
and to fyve clerkis of hygh clergye
with the tothyr Meyne that ston to Gye,
and seiden that God ful mochel hadde j-do,
that swich myracle wolde schewe*n* hem so.

The others return to mass.

thanne in they wente*n* anon to Masse

7005. Small erasure after *ston*.
7029. þ^e squeezed in afterwards.

hit owt to here*n*, bothe More and lasse,
More-ouer to ȝelden god here thankynge,
and te deum laudam*us* thei go*n*ne to synge.
And wha*n*ne that te devm was j-doon,
From the awter he torned anon,
and seide: "sires, now Mown ȝe se
that amo*n*ges ȝow so*m*me goode me*n* be,
that god here now thorwgh ȝoure preyere
To vs swich tokeny*n*ges hath schewed here.
wherfore here J comande ȝow alle
that, vppon what Man this lot befalle,
For love, for hate, ne*þ*er for Envye,
whethir to pore or to Riche it happe, trewlye,
that no*n* Man aȝens this Elexiou*n* ne be,
Sethen it is goddis wille, as ȝe mown se.
For Ho so contrarieth His signefiance,
J drede on him that he wil werke veniance!"

Thanksgivings are offered.

After Te Deum, the archbishop again addresses the people,

exhorting them not to oppose, on any account, him whom God shall choose;

[leaf 115 *a*] for such opposition would be avenged.

Thanne forth this goodman his Masse gan synge,
ȝeving to god bothe lawde and preysinge.
and wha*n*ne the Masse was al j-don,
alle to that ston they wenten Echon.
thanne Ech of other gan to Enqwere
whiche that ferst Scholde assayen there
that swerd owt of that styth to drawe,
and to ben governo*ur* bothe of lond & lawe.
thanne acordid they to-gideris Echon
that of hem ne scholde assayen it non
othir thanne the Erschebischope schold chese,
Jn forveture his worschepe forto lese.
thanne began there ful gret discord
betwixen co*mun*es, gentyles, and lord,
that to ony Enerytaunce hadden Ryht.
to that swerd they wente*n* wi*th* al here Myht,
which that ferst Myhte wy*n*nen therto
vppon that Swerd his Myht to do.
thanne seide therchebischope to hem agein:
"Amonge*s* ȝow here, in certeyn,

After mass, all go to the stone.

It is decided that only those chosen by the archbishop shall try the sword.

However, such as consider themselves more privileged, are dissatisfied.

7054. MS. *whethir or pore or to*, the last *r* corrected from *t*.

The archbishop admonishes the people, saying that no one knows the pre-ordinance of God,

Nis non So wis ne non worthy
that goddis wyl here knoweth, trewely,
whiche of 3ow that he wyle chese,
othir wich of 3ow the stat schal lese.
but of on thing J dar 3ow wel say:

and that noble birth and wealth avail nothing here.

that Neythir gentrye ne Richesse this day
Ne schal not onlych his wille hauen here,
Sauf onliche god be his powere.
For, Sires, 3it j sey 3ow furthermore,
J trowe that he 3it ne be not bore
that this swerd here owt schal drawe,
To ben 3owr lord of lond and lawe."

All quietly withdraw from the stone.

thanne acordedyn they alle, *with*-owten faille,
anon to that Erchebischoppis cownsaylle,
and withdrowen hem thanne Everichone
From that swerd Ryht alle anone.

The archbishop weepingly commends their humility,

thanne wepe the Bischope for pure pyte,
thanne jn hem he sawgh swich humylyte,
and seide: "this Meknesse jnto 3ow Entred Js
be vertw of cryst, with-owten Mys!
and j wile that 3e knowen owt Ryht
that aftyr the wylle of god almyht
J wile werken, Sires, ful otterly,
Goddis wraththe to eschewen pleynly.

and asks them to wait till after the festival.

Abydeth tyl that this feste be do,
and the swerd to assayen schole we gon to."
So whanne this feste was J-past,

So they do.

To that swerd they wenten jn hast.

Then the archbishop says:

"Now, sires, beholdith here goddis Myht,
that he for vs hath wrowht aryht!

"When justice was first instituted, the sword was given to uphold it;

For ferst whanne crist ordeyned justise,
Sires, j 3ow seye, hit was jn this wyse:
be the spere and be the swerd
he ordeyned to Gouerne al Middillerd.
For the swerd was ferst betake,
holy chirche to defendyn from wrake.

now, by means of the sword, our election shall be made.

and here be the swerd is oure Electioun,
this Reem to Governen al and Som.

7102. *Goddis*, *G* through correction.
7116. *Som*, *S* through correction.

and therfore good cownseyl that ȝe make
ho that this wile on hym take,
be he neu*e*re so hygh, prowd, o*þ*er Riche,
and thowgh he seme no*n* man him liche.
loke ȝe pore men ne ben not wroth,
thowgh that the Riche to ȝow ben loth,
thowgh they assayen the swerd to-fore,
For grettere tha*n*ne ȝe they be*n* & worthiere more.
For vnknoweng hit is to ȝow alle
ȝit on whom the lot schal falle,
whethir on Lord, knyht, or sqwyer,
On powr, comown, o*þ*er oñ bacheler,
or which of ȝow alle kyng schal be,
hit is ȝit vnknowe*n*, ful Sykerle!"

Let the rich be humble,

the poor forbearing.

Nobody knows on whom the lot shall fall!"

[leaf 115 *b*]

Thus anon acordid alle that Ensemble
To therchebisschop*e*, ful Sekyrle,
with-owten ony rankewr of herte;
there was no*n* word that hem asterte;
but ho so wolde, scholde hit asaye,
thus acordid they alle, w*ith*-owte*n* delaye.
tha*n*ne assentyd they everychon
To what lord therto wolde gon,
and to whom *þ*at god wolde sende*n* his gr*a*ce,
openly to ben schewyd jn that place.
tha*n*ne retorned they al jn fere
To therchebisschop*e* ano*n* there,
and ij .c. & .L. they chosen anon
of the worthyest, that myhte gon
Forto asayen there here myht,
On whom that god wolde schewe*n* *þ*e Ryht.
but amonge*s* hem ne was *þ*ere non
*þ*e swerd to remeve owt of *þ*at ston.
So tha*n*ne wente alle o*þ*ere in fere
of comune*s*, of powre me*n*, *þ*at were*n* there,
Forto asayen what they myhten do.
but al availled hit hem not a slo,
For remeved hit myht be for no*n* man;
Swich miracle god gan schewe*n* than.
So that hit was comanded jn hast

All approve of the archbishop's words,

and make generous concessions.

First 250 nobles are chosen to try the sword,

but none can move it.

Then the others who are present, try it,

likewise in vain.

Finally, ten men are appointed to guard the sword, with orders not to prevent anybody from trying it.

To .x. worthy men to kepen Jt fast,
and that they Scholde non Man lette
hit to asayen, ho that myht it fette
and forto taken it owt of þat ston,
That he were Markyd Ryht anon.

Fruitless trying goes on for a week.

So that thus the swerd asayed was
.viij. dayes to-gederis Jn that plas.
and whanne Eche Man hadde asayed his Myht,

Then the archbishop holds forth the power of God.

Thanne seide therchebischope anon Ryht:
"Now Mown ȝe alle wel vndirstonde
that this is werk of Goddis sonde,
For power of this swerd hath non man, pleyn,
but hym that God hath chosen, certeyn!"

The people vow they will not leave the town, till they see the issue.

thanne sworen they alle jn that place
that owt of thike town they wolde not pace,
Tyl they wyste the victorye ho scholde have;
thus Sworen they alle, so god hem save.

All go to their lodgings.

thanne, whanne the Masse thus was j-do,
Eche Man to his ostage gan forto go.
and whanne thei hadden Eten Everychon,
to this swerd they wenten alle anon,

Then a tournament is got up,

and þere Eche Man torneyed with oþer,
þe sone aȝens fadyr, brothir aȝens broþir.
and Evere behelden these .x. worthy Men
Ho that the swerd scholde beren then.

and the ten guardians look on

more ouer thei beheld the gret Tornaye,
how Eche man his Myht gan there asaye.
(So happede that antronys sone þat Tyde
knyht was Mad in armes to Ryde,
at halewyntyd to-fore þat hygh feste
of cristemasse, as hit lyht in geste.)

with the rest.

and the sothe to tellen, ful Sekirle,
al that town wente to that torne.
and whanne þat tornement begonnen was,

Sir Kay calls on Arthur to fetch his sword from their hostel.

that sire kay clepid arthewr jn þat plas.
"dere brothyr," seyde sire kay anon,
"That to owre ostage ȝe wolde gon,
and that my swerd ȝe bringen to Me,

7175, 7181. *thei*, *i* squeezed in afterwards.
7186. *hit*, *t* on erasure.

how so euere hit happe, j preye to þe."
thanne arthewr, þat was ful Servisable,
Forth took his weye, with-owten fable,
As faste prekende As He myhte Ryde,
hom to his ostage that jlke tyde.
and whanne to his ost that he was gon,
nethir man ne womman fonde he non,
but alle weren they gon, with-owten delaye,
Forto Sen that grete Tornaye.
So whanne his brotheris swerd he myhte not gete,
Ful tendirly the teres he dide down lete,
and so wepyngly he torned ageyn,
Tyl þat to-fore the mynstre he cam, ful pleyn,
and sawgh that swerd where hit stood
Faste jn þe ston, & þerto he 3ood,
For toforn asaied he neuere that game
The Sword to geten to haven a fame.
For 3if the swerd he myhte arere,
To his brothir he wolde hit bere.
and assone as he gan asaye,
the swerd he gat with-owten delaye,
and vndir his lappe hit kepte preve,
and þer-with to his brothir he gan to fle.
and whanne sire kay sawh hym komenge,
a3ens his brothir he gan to flynge,
also faste as he myhte ryde,
his swerd to haven at that tyde,
and seide: "Brothyr, J 3ow praye,
3eve me my swerd, & not 3e delaye!"
"now certein, brothir, j ne have hit nowht,
but here anothir j have 3ow browht."
and from vndir his cote he drowh it owt.
Anon he hit knew, with-owten dowt,
that the same swerd hit was anon
whiche tofore þe mynstre stood jn þe ston.
Anon he thoughte þanne, with-owten lesyng,
that be that swerd he scholde be kyng.
thanne comaunded he his brothir arthewr anon

Arthur rides home to the hostel,
[leaf 115 *c*]
but finds no one at home,
and, to his great distress, cannot get at the sword.
In returning past the cathedral, he sees the sword in the stone,
thinks that he may take that instead,
gets it out easily,
hides it under his lappet, and hastens to his brother.
Sir Kay meets him,
receives the sword, recognises it at once,
and resolves to make a deceitful use of it.

7202. *grete*, *r* corrected from *e*.
7209. MS. *fortofo n*.

Kay sends Arthur to fetch his father.

aftyr Antron his Fadyr Forto gon,
where þat Evere he Myhte hym gete,
and þat for non thing he scholde lete.
So longe wente arthewr, that he him fond,
and Forth hym þere browhte be þe hond.
thanne, whanne Sire kay his Fadyr beheld,
where as he hovede vndir his Scheld:

When Antron arrives,

Kay shows him the sword, and says he hopes to be king.

"Lo, be-hold, fadyr, j schal be kyng;
This swerd to Me is good tokenyng.
For this same stak Jn the ston,
whiche han asayed hyt ful Manyon.
So that Thus is now my destene
that Nedis be this swerd kyng moste j be!"

Antron is surprised,

And whanne the Fadyr beheld al this,
Ful Mochel Merveille he hadde, j-wys,

and asks Kay how he came by it.

and axede Sire kay ful pleynly
how he thike swerd þat he Cam by.

Kay answers that he took it out of the stone.

anon he him answered, & not forsook,
That owt of the ston he hit took.
and whanne that Antron herde this,

Antron does not believe him.

he hym belevyd non thing, j-wis,
but seide pleynly he Made Gabbyng,
hym forto tellen ony swich thing.

Father and son repair to the stone.

So forth they wenten bothe jn fere
To-ward the Mynstre anon Ryht there.
and whanne that Antron Sawh the ston,
Ek also the swerd awey was Gon,

Antron exhorts Kay to tell the truth,

thanne seide Antron To his sone: "sire kay,
Loke that the sothe ȝe me now say
how þat ȝe komen now be this swerd;
Sey me þe sothe, and be not aferd.

[leaf 115 *d*] at the peril of being disowned

And ȝif ony lesyng ȝe to Me Make,
For ȝoure Fadir ȝe me neuere take;
and ȝif ȝe me Maken ony lesyng,
J schal hit wel knowen, with-owten fayllyng;

and forfeiting his love.

and þerto ȝow to loven neuere schal J
For non Man þat to me speketh, trewely!"

7243. *Thus*, *T* corrected from (a commenced) *h*.

thanne to his Fadyr answerid Sire kay :
" Certeyn, Fadir, the sothe j schal ȝow say :
My brothir Arthewr me hit browhte,
whanne for myn he wente & fond it nowhte.
but j ne wot how that he jt wan,
Neþer howh he it gat, tellen j ne kan."
" Take me that swerd, sone, j the praye,
and anon j schal don hyt asaye."
This swerd, Sire kay to his fadir it took ;
thanne Antron ful son behinde hym gan look,
& sawh where Arthewr stood besyde.
Anon he hym clepede jn that Tyde :
" haue this swerd, sone, Jn thin honde,
and aȝen to putten hit thou hit Fonde
Jnto the same plase there hit ferst was,
ȝif that god wil graunte ȝow swich gras."
This swerd on honde Arthewr took wel sone,
and toward that ston he gan to gone,
and hit aȝen sette Jn the Same place,
as faste holdyng as to-forn hit wace.
thanne comandid Antron to sire kay, his sone,
To assaien that swerd þere Ryht anone.
Anon this swerd he gan to asaye,
but the grace was not to Sire kaye.
thanne to hym spak his Fadir Antron :
" this swerd took þou neuere owt of this ston ! "
thanne Artheur jn his armes Antron gan brace,
and seide : " dere child, and j mowe the purchace
of al this lond here kyng to be,
dere child, what reward wost þou ȝeven to me ? "
" Fadir, ony good that j may haue,
hit most ben ȝoures, what ȝe wilen crave,
as child to the Fadyr nedis most seyn,
ȝoures schal it ben al hol and pleyn ! "
" Sire," quod Antron to Arthewr jn hy,
" ȝowre Fadyr was j neuere, trewely,
but as be the weye of norture,
Ful certein, Sire, j ȝow ensure.

Kay confesses the truth.

Antron demands the sword from him,

and tells Arthur to put it back into the stone.

Arthur does so.

Then Antron commands his son to try and take it out.

But Kay cannot move it.

Antron is now sure, embraces Arthur, and asks what reward he shall have, if he makes Arthur king.

Antron tells Arthur that he is only his foster-father.

7285. *Arthewr*, *t* through correction.
7295. *ntron* on erasure. 7302. MS. *ȝour'es.*

Neþer ho the be-gat, j hit not knowe,
whethir he were man hy oþer lowe!" 7308

Arthur weeps with disappointment,
and whanne Arthewr this vndirstood,
That his Fadyr denoyede his blood,
he wepte ful harde teres smerte
For tendirnesse *with* humble herte, 7312

and wonders how he, being of obscure birth, can attain such distinction.
and seide: "dere sire, howgh may this be,
that swich good oþer worschepe scholde *turne* to me,
this or ony othir worldly thing,
Sethen ȝe me knowe*n* not of myn E[n]gendryng?" 7316
"ȝis, Sire, a Fadyr hauen ȝe be kynde,
what so Evere j putte ȝow jn Mynde.

Antron inquires again about his reward, in case Arthur should have that grace.
but, Sire, and hit be þe wille of God almyht
That to this Grace ȝe come*n* be Ryht, 7320
and ȝif hit Mowe be Fortheryd by Me,
Sire, what schal thanne My Mede be?"
thanne answerid Arthewr to hym welsone:
"What ȝe wilen desiren of ony bone." 7324

Antron further relates of his wife's sacrifice,
thanne sette on Antron also blyve,
and tolde Arthewr of al his lyve,
[leaf 116 *a*] And How His Norse that His Wyf Was,
and Norsched his sone kay Jn othyr plas, 7328
and sook the Mylk of a straunge wo*m*man—
"and my wyf ȝow Fostred, as ȝhe wel can;
Therefore to Me, Sire, and to Myn sone
ȝe owhten to Sen a good Gwerdone. 7332

and of their joint tender care.
For ȝow haue j Norsched as tendirly,
bothe J and my wyf, Sire, trewely,
as Euere child Norsched myhte be,
j telle ȝow, sire arthewr, ful sikerle!" 7336

Arthur implores him still to consider him his son.
"thanne preye j ȝow," quod Arthewr thanne,
"lik as ȝe bien a worschepful Manne,
That ȝe wolden not disnoyen Me,
but J as ȝowre sone Euere forto be. 7340
For ȝif that ȝe wyle me thus forsake,
thanne wot j not how on to take.
and ȝif that God this Grace me sende,
to ȝow & to ȝowre sone j wil ben ful kende. 7344

7316. MS. *Egendryng*; cf. *Efured*, l. 5998.

For what thing that ȝe desiren of ME,
certein, Sire, grauntyd sone schal jt be!"
"Sire," quod Antron, "j ne schal axen non thing
That myhte tornen to ȝowre hyndring,
NEthyr ȝowre Lond, ne ȝowre RIchesse,
NE non thing that ȝow schal distresse.
But of on thing J wolde ȝow praye,
and that ȝe hit ME not with-NAye,
but that kay, MY sone, ȝowre steward be
alle ȝowre Londes forto over-se;
And thowh that he to ȝow forfete,
owthir to ony other, Jn Jre or hete,
Nethir for non trespas that he MAy do,
From that offys to putten hym fro,
but as longe as his lyf MAy ENdure,
of ȝoure stewardschepe to ben Sure.
And thowgh he be vnkurteys or vnkynde,
thanne jn ȝoure herte ȝe have jn MYnde
That of a-NOthir MY[l]k NOrsched was he
thanne of his owne MOdyr, SEkyrle.
and þerfore Suffren him MOre ȝe MOste
Thanne to ony other, as J ȝow troste.
wherfore of this bone J preye to the,
and that ȝe wylen not wernen it to ME!"
Thanne answerid Arthewr ful sone anon:
"Alle ȝowre hole askynge j graunt Sone."
Thussone Antron took Arthewr anon,
and to the hygh awter þanne gonne they gon.
there Arthewr Swor on his Surawnce
that heste to holden, with-owten variaunce.
And whanne he hadde thus his oth MAd,
Thanne antron & sire kay weren ful GLad.
So toward the Torneye thanne gonne they gon,
but homward they comen EVerychon;
And that day fynysched was the gret Torneye,
So that toward the MYnstre they comen jn hye
There alle here EVensong forto here,

Arthur is willing to give his foster-father anything he shall choose.

Antron desires Arthur to make Kay his steward,

and to forgive his foster-brother any transgression,

remembering that the latter has had to drink another woman's milk.

Arthur gives the promise,

and confirms it by a solemn oath.

By this time, the people return from the tournament, and go to even-song.

7363. MS. *Myk.*
7367. *bone* added above the line.

For ȝit of thelecciou*n* they weren jn dwere.

Antron goes with his friends before the archbishop,

Tha*n*ne clepede antron his Frendis anon,
and tofore therchebisschop*e* go*n*ne they gon,
and Seyde: "Sire, here J ȝow praye,
Lesteneth to me now what j schal Saye.

and says that his son would like to try the sword before all the lords.

Sire bisschop*e*, j haue a ȝong Sone here
That Js no*n* knyht, and ȝit wolde he lere
To asayen the swerd that Js Jn the ston
aforn these Lordynges here everychon.
Sire Bisschop*e*, of this he doth me preye,
Therfore the arende here J to ȝow Seye."

The barons are summoned.

Tha*n*ne clepyd were*n* alle the Barou*n*s to semble,
aforn that ston to aperen, ful Sykirle.
So wha*n*ne assembled they weren echon,
Antron to Arthewr tha*n*ne seide anon:
"go forth, and asaye this swe|d ryht here,
[leaf 116 b] Hyt Owt to drawen ȝyf ȝe ko*n*ne lere."

In the presence of all, Arthur pulls out the sword,

Anon Arthewr to this swerd wente
aforn alle the peple there presente,
and that swerd there pulde owt Ryht sone,
anon to the Byschop*e* there-with gan gone,

and offers it to the archbishop,

and offryd hit vpe jnto his hond
Toforn alle þe peple þ*a*t there dyd stond.
The Bysschop*e* resceyved hit ful blyve,

who joyfully embraces him.

and ful joyful was in his lyve.
So that Arthewr jn his armes þ*e*re gan he brase
aforn al the people Jn that plase,

With song and ringing of bells, Arthur is carried by the clergy into the cathedral.

and Te deum lavdam*us* he gan to Synge,
Therto alle the bellys ano*n* go*n*nen rynge.
So thus to the mynstre they go*n*ne hym bere,
The Bysschop*e* w*i*th the clergye þ*a*t was there.

But the barons are sad,

Tha*n*ne alle the Baronage that þ*e*re was,
Gret sorewe and morneng maden jn þ*a*t plas,
and Seyden, certein, hit Scholde neu*e*re be,
a knave to be set Jn so hygh degre,

and disallow the election.

Neyther to ben here Sovereyn ne kyng;
They wolde hit Suffren for non thing.

7382. *dwere*, the first *e* added above the line.
7414. *Maden*, *M* corrected from *j*.

Anon Therschebisschope wax Ryht wroth,
For here wordis to hym weren ful loth,
and seyde: "Lordynges, wylen ȝe vndirstonde
Of hym that is kyng of See and Londe,
he knoweth bettere what is to done,
thanne alle the compenye of ȝow Echone!"
Anon Antron and alle the comunes jn fere
To Arthewr anon assembleden there,
and the Barowns the contrarye helden anon
aȝens Arthewr and the comunes Echon.
Thanne spak Therchebisschope with angry herte
wordys ful bolde, whiche þat hem Smerte:
"knowen ȝe wel, Lordynges here present,
That this Js holy owre Lordis Entent,
how this persone only ȝoure kyng schal be
Of his owne Electioun, Lordynges, Sykerle!
wherfore j schal ȝow schewe, Er ȝe hyt crave,
what affyaunse jn god here-offen that j have.
Now go forth, arthewr, My sone so dere,
Goddys wyl to schewen among this peple here.
Goth and sette the swerd there as Jt was,
Openly to-forn the peple jn this plas."
anon arthewr with good herte and wylle
Therchebisschoppis wyl wente to fulfylle,
and pyhte the Swerd Jnto that Ston;
and also Faste hit there helde anon
as Evere hyt dyde ony tyme to-fore,
as sad, as Faste, and al so sore.
and whanne thus that arthewr hadde don,
Thanne to hem seyde therchebysschope anon:
"A fayrere Electioun Neuere there was
Thanne God hath Schewed ȝow jn this plas.
Therfore goth now, bothe powre & Riche, jnfaye,
vppon the Sword ȝowre Myht al to assaye."
anon asayed Every Man jn his degre,
but For hem alle hit wolde not be.
Thanne seide to hem Therschebisschope ageyn:
"Now ben ȝe alle grete Foles, jn certeyn,
Oure Lordys wyl to contraryen here,

The archbishop angrily reproves the barons.

The commons assemble about Arthur, but the barons still oppose.

The archbishop censures them again,

saying that he will show them God's will.

He tells Arthur to put the sword in its former place.

Arthur obeys,

and the sword sticks as firmly as ever.

He then tells the others to try.

But all fail.

The archbishop then exclaims: "You are fools to oppose our Lord's will!"

7425, 7428. MS. *cōunēs.*

that jn hevene ne Erthe he ne hath non pere!"

The barons reply that they do not oppose God's will, but are annoyed at Arthur's low birth.

"Sire, we ne Erren not aȝens Goddis wylle,
but of on thing hyt Greveth vs ylle:
that a knave here owre kyng scholde be
and over vs to haven the Sovereynte."
"Now, lordynges," quod therchebysschope thanne,
"he that js bothe God and Manne,
knoweth bettyr what js Forto done
[leaf 116c] Thanne Alle the Compenye Of ȝow Echone!"

Anon whanne the Barouns herden al this,
Ful sore they weren abasched, j-wys,
They therefore desire the archbishop to let the sword remain in its place till Candlemass.

and besowghten the Byschope alle jn Fere
That thike swerd myhte stylle abyden there
Jnto the Feste Seweng of kandilmasse,
hyt there to asayen bothe More & lasse
that Neuere the Swerd assayede to-fore,
thanne here Myghtes to assayen thore.
The archbishop assents.

Thussone therchebisschope hem grauntyd anon
That al here askyng there scholde be done.
At Candlemass,

So whanne this Feste tho comen was,
The peple Gan semblen jn-to that plas,
people try the sword again, but ever in vain.

and hit assaieden there Everychon,
but of al that peple was there not on
That the swerd there owt taken Myhte;
hit was the lasse wondyr: they hadden non Ryhte.
Thanne Seyde the Bysschope anon Ryht to hem alle:
"Now knowen ȝe what Ryht to ȝow doth falle,
therfore welen we now assayen Goddis wylle."
Arthur, at the word of the archbishop,

And anon to arthewr he seyde vntylle:
"Go forth now, Arthewr, My child so dere,
To schewen what God wyl don for the here
and ȝyf he wyle that thou here Lord be,
the Swerd go take owt, now let se!"
Thanne wente forth arthewr Ryht anone,
draws it out as easily as if nothing kept it.

and that Swerd pulde owt thussone,
and as lyhtly took hit jn-to his hand,
as thowgh non thyng hyt hadde withstand,
and took hyt to therchebisschope anon Ryht,

7459. MS. *aȝeng.*

Thankynge only God of his grete Myht.
Therchebisschope and the clergyes alle
beheldyn how this kas be-gan to falle.
They wepten alle for joye jn that place,
and only thankyd God of his grete Grace.
Thanne axede the Bysschope hem jn vyrown:
"which of 3ow May contraryen this Elecciown?"
Anon answerede the Riche Men ageyn,
and preyden the Bysschope, in certeyn,
3yt forto Suffren that swerd to stonde—
"Tyl hyt han assayed Mo Men Jn Londe;
that schal ben at Pask now next sewenge,
so longe to abyden, for ony thynge.
And 3yf at that tyme there be non Man
that thanne the swerd owt taken ne kan,
Ellis, Syre bisschope, be thin comaundement
hym wilen we obeyen alle, verament.
And but 3yf 3e welen granten vs this heste,
Elles Everyman let don his beste!"
"wylen 3e," quod therchebisschope thanne,
"with good herte obeyen, Everymanne,
and J hyt Suffre jnto that day?"
"3e, sire," they seyden alle, with-owten delay.
Thanne seyde therchebisschope to Arthewr tho:
"dere Syre, to the ston a3en that 3e go,
and Setteth the swerd there-jnne ageyn.
For of on thing j dar Seyen 3ow pleyn:
3e scholen neuere fayllen of that thyng
that 3ow hath behoten owre hevene kyng."
Thanne Arthewr styrte hym forth before,
and the swerd jn his place putte Ryht thore.
Anon was ordeyned be comaundement
That swerd to kepen tho, verament,
Ten worthy Men, and clerkys Fyve,
and fyve lower men of good lyve.
The swerd that tyme as faste there was
as Evere to-fore hit stood jn that plas.
Thus abod the kynges Arthewr Sacreng

The archbishop and the clergy weep for joy.

The barons want another respite, till Easter, and promise, if nobody else can take out the sword, then to acknowledge Arthur.

The archbishop tells Arthur once more to put back the sword.

Arthur again obeys.

Men are placed to guard the sword, as before.

7512. *alle* daubed.

Jnto the feste of Esterne next comeng.
[leaf 116 *d*] The archbishop exhorts Arthur to a good life, Therchebysschope Seyde to Arthewr thanne:
"thou schalt ben here kyng, here governour & Manne,
Therfore loke Evere a goodman that thou be
From this tyme forward Jn alle degre.
and advises him to choose his counsellors and retinue. and chese now whiche of thy conseyl scholen be,
and jn thin houshold to haven onest Meyne,
Evene as this day that thou were kyng alone,
lik as thou schalt be helpe of hevene kyng in trone."
"Sire," quod arthewr, "j wyle ful wel
jn Goddis ordenaunce putten me Echedel;
Arthur leaves this with the archbishop and aftyr 3oure cownseyl, Syre, wyle j do,
whethir hit me torne to wele oþer wo.
and therfore Swich Meyne that [3e] me chese
bothe God and holychirche forto plese.
and Antron. And clepyth my Fadyr to 3owre counsayl,
For he is a Man that May mochel avayl."
Thanne clepyd the bysschope his fadyr Antron,
and bad with hym that he scholde gon.
thussone he tolde hym Every word,
how Artheur and he weren atte acord.
They choose two counsellors, thanne anon chosen they tweyne conseylleris
of worthy Men and gret perys.
That so be here counseyl, j vndirstond,
and make Kay steward. sire kay was Mad steward of his lond.
and alle the Remenant abyden stylle
jnto the feste of Pask with Ryht good wylle.
and whanne that feste was comen than,
To Londone they comen Every Man.
On Easter eve the barons are summoned to the archbishop's palace. Vppon Pask Evenen the bisschope forth Sente
aftyr alle the baronage, veramente,
Jn his paleys to Maken here Semble;
This was his wylle, ful certeinle.
Thanne axede he hem of alle here wylle,
3if to that chyld they wolden consentyn vntylle.
Thanne answeryd the Baronage ageyn:
"we wyl not contraryen, jn certeyn,
The wyl of oure Lord, hevene kyng.

7547. MS. *that me.*

But vs Merveilleth of this child so 3yng
and therto so lowe j-born of degre,
That Swich a pore man oure kyng schold be."
"Now certein," quod the bisschope thanne,
"j ne holde 3ow none goode crystene Menne
To contraryen Goddis owne Elecciown,
that to 3ow here is schewed al & Som!"
"Syre, that wyl we not jn non partye,
a3ens Goddis wyl here not applye.
but Sethen 3e knowen of his degre,
and of his Byrthe 3e seyn, sykyrle,
Sire, to vs alle hyt Js vnknowe
and to alle this Baronye vppon this Rowe."
"thanne wylen 3e letten now hys crowneng,
at this tyme forto Maken hym kyng?"
"3e, Sire Bisschope, tyl we knowen More,
and we Scholen Seyn 3ow a skele wherfore.
Tyl we knowen bettyr what he Js,
and whens he cometh, with-owten Mys,
Respyt we preyen of this Sacre,
3if that 3owre wylle hit myhte so be."
quod therchebysschope to that Baronage:
"Now knowe j wel alle 3owre owtrage!"
"Nay, Sire, non lengere thanne Pentecost
we hit not axen, with-owten bost;
and thus we preyen that 3e wolden do,
3if that 3ow lyke to consentyn therto."
vppon this quod the Bysschope thanne:
"we schole ben avysed Every Manne."
So thus departyd there that cownsaylle,
Arthewr to worschepe, þe baronage to dysavaylle.

So that vppon the Morewe, Aftyr Masse,
To the ston Arthewr a3en gan passe.
and that swerd he took owt fulsone,
lyk as to-fore tymes he hadde there done.
Thanne held they hym only For here kyng
with-owten More varyaunce other lettyng,
and preyden hym to putten the swerd jn ageyn

The barons still take exception to Arthur's low birth,

wish for information on that point,

and desire prolonged respite,

till Whit-Sunday.

[leaf 117 *a*] On Easter morning, Arthur, as before, takes out the sword,

and puts it in again

7601. *cownfaylle*, *a* corrected from *e*.

There as to-fore Jt stood, *with*-owten leyn,
The barons ask Arthur to open his heart to them. and that to hem he wolde speke
and somwhat of his herte to hem breke. 7612
"Sires, that schal j do with good wylle,
and 3e to ME wyl lestene vntylle;
and of what thing that 3e preyen ME,
J Schal Jt 3ow grawnten, Sires, certeynle." 7616
They take him into the cathedral, Thanne ladden they hym to the MYNSTRE anon
To speken with hym there EVERYCHON.
"Sire, we vndirstonde Jn owre ENTENT
and say that they will acknowledge him as their lord and do him homage, That 3e ben owre Lord, verament; 7620
and what 3e desiren from this day,
we wylen hit *per*formen, *with*-owten NAY,
and therto owre londes of 3ow to holde,
and homage to don 3ow ful MANYFOLDE, 7624
but want to have the coronation postponed. of 3oure Sacryng 3if Respyt that 3e do
jnto pentecost, certein, with-owten MO;
and NEUE*re* the lasse kyng scholen 3e be,
and kepen 3owre stat, worschyp*e*, & dignete." 7628
Arthur says he will receive no homage, "How Schold j," quod arthewr thanne,
"Homage Resceyven of ony MANNE,
Tyl J-Sacred Fulliche that j be
and jn MY stat at alle MANER*e* degre? 7632
but will grant the postponement, But of the RESPYT that 3e me preye,
j wele not denyen hit Jn non weye.
3yt, that j schal not Sacred be,
Sires, j Sey 3ow now certeinle, 7636
desiring nothing except by the will of the Heavenly King. That NETHYR kyngdom ne worschepe j desire
but be wyl of the kyng of the hygh EMPYRE.
And EK 3if that 3e consenten therto,
Ful moche the bettere hit MAY be do." 7640
The barons praise his wisdom. Thanne answeryd the Baronage ageyn,
and of this chyld Seyden, Jn certeyn:
"3if he MOWE lyven and ENDUREN MAY,
[he] Schal ben RYHT wys, the sothe to say, 7644
[F]or wondyrly he doth vs answere here

7632. MS. *degr'e.*

7644–46, 7652–56. The beginning letters were more or less damaged or destroyed through the leaf getting stuck to, and then pulled off from, the strip of parchment used for mending the preceding leaf.

[j]n Every poynt, with-owten dwere!" — The barons repeat their demand.
Thanne seide to hym the Baronage ageyn:
"Sire, of on thing we preyen 3ow pleyn:
Now at this pentecost 3e Sacred scholen be
and Resceyven 3owre crowne and dignete.
and with-jnne this Terme obeyen welen we,
To don 3ow homage, Servyse, and Fe,
[a]s owre Erchebisschope wyl vs telle;
we wylen werken aftyr his spelle."

thanne alle ornementis browht they forth, sykirle, — The barons bring forth all the royal ornaments, to see if Arthur is covetous.
That to a kyng belonged Jn alle degre,
Forto assayen Jn here Manere
3yf owht coveytous that he were.
Thanne axede this worthy Arthewr anon
of these Estates alle be on & on,
and what Eche Man was jn his degre.
So that Good departed there anon thanne he, — Arthur liberally distributes clothes, gold, and silver amongst the worthiest.
and 3af bothe Riche Robes, gold, and Fe
To Erl, Barouns, & knyhtes, ful gret plente;
and the Gold and þe Sylver that hym browht was,
anon he departyd jn that plas
To sweche as hym thowhte best weren there,
So that Love he gat hym Every where.

Thus departed Arthewr His 3yftes Alle — [leaf 117 *b*]
that to hym weren browht, bothe grete and smalle.
and whanne they syen hym of alle thinges so gent, — The people express their approval
anon they Seyden Jn here Entent
That a worthy Man he Scholde be
and Neuere coveytous jn Non degre. — of his liberality
"But verrayly vs semeth Jn his avyse,
and he hadde Resceyved his dygnete,
that to hym gret grace scholde Resorte,
as Evere to ony Man that was of his porte.
For Every Man he Rewardyth aftyr his degre, — and discrimination.
and Every stat Gwerdoneth ful pryncypale!"
And Neuere Evel tach jn hym they fownde
of alle that tyme Jn thyke stownde.

7646, 7652–56. See the preceding footnote.
7663. *gold* through correction.

So thus the Sacreng there gan abyde
jnto pentecost, that holy tyde.

For Whit-Sunday, the people re-assemble in London, and try the sword,

Thanne Sembled they Echon ageyn
at londone Eftsones, J Sey 3ow pleyn.
There the swerd a3en they gonne asaye
To pullen Jt owt, ho so pullen maye.

in vain, as before.

but there was non man jn that plase
That swerd to taken, ne hadde non grase.

The archbishop gets everything ready for the coronation.

Thanne therchebisschope anon ryht
alle thinges aparayllede, j 3ow plyht,
Bothe corowne, Septre, and the sacrynge,
al this he ordeyned, with-owten lesynge.

On Whitsun eve, Arthur is knighted.

Vppon the whitsonne Even, satirday at nyht,
therchebisschope took cownseyl at Barown & knyht,
and that nyht Artheur knyht was mad,
Er ony more dignite that he had.
and that Nyht in preyeris lay Everyman,
Tyl vppon the morwen that hit dawen began.

Next morning, in the cathedral, the archbishop

So vppon the morewen, whanne hit was day lyht,
To the maister chirche cam bothe barown & knyht.
Thanne bespak therchebisschope Ful sone:
"Sires, 3e weten what 3e han to done.
Lo, here this man of goddis chesing
To ben bothe 3oure gouernour & kyng!

displays the royal emblems,

beholdith here vestures, and robys ryal,
and the corowne of this lond with-al,
Be the counseyl of Ryalis and of oþer mo
this coronacioun here forto ben do.

and inquires if any one opposes the coronation.

3it wolde j weten not For than
3if that here be ony Swich man
that this Eleccion here wolde with-seye;
of this the sothe wolde j knowen, Jn feye."

All acquiesce.

thanne answerid they alle be on assent:
"we wylen he be crowned, verament."

The archbishop announces that Arthur forgives all that has happened.

"Thanne with this," quod the bisschope thanne,
"So he haue the hertis here of Euery Manne,
what a3ens hym hath be wrowht jnto this day,
he it to 3ow for3evith for Evere and ay."

The barons kneel.

Thanne knelyd they down al jn fere,

and to Arthewr cryden Mercy there.
thussone a3ens hem he knelede vppon his kne,
and vppon hem he wepe for pure pyte,
Seyeng to hem there, fulsore weping:
"J for3eve to 3ow alle 3owre trespasyng,
and so j preye to God an hy
that he hyt for3eve, & so wyle J."
Thanne Rysen they alle be on assent,
and hym gonne Embracen with good Entent,
and him vp boren, and there forth ladde
there as the Robes the bisschope leyd hadde.
So thanne they hym vestured anon,
and the bischope thussone to masse ward gan gon.
Anon As the Bysschope there Redy Was,
To Artheur there cam he jnto that plas.
"Sire, to the Swerd now 3e Mosten go
and hyt vptaken, as tofore 3e han do,
wherwith holychirche defenden as a knyht
and also cristendom with al 3owre Myht."
Thanne wenten they forth on procession,
bothe prelates, lordis, and comunes Echon,
Tyl they comen there as the swerd was
Stekyng jn the ston jn the forseid plas.
Thanne seide therchebisschope to Artheur there:
"Lesteneth now to Me, and 3e scholen here.
3yf hit so be that thow wylt Swere
and to God avowen & his Modyr dere,
Ek to Petyr and Powl, Enswre thou Me,
and to alle Seyntes that jn hevene be,
holy chirche to susteynen jn hire Ryht
and pes jn thy Lond with al thy Myht,
Ek the vnconseylled forto cownseylle,
Thy peple to worschepe and avaylle,
To thy Power this schalt thou do,
and Ryhtful lawes to Meynteyne also,
with this com forth, take vpe this Swerd,
whom God hath chosen jn this Middilerd!"
Anon so Arthew[r] herde al this,

and cry his mercy.
Arthur kneels also,
and weepingly says he forgives them.
All rise,
they embrace Arthur,
invest him with the royal robes,
[leaf 117 c]
and walk in procession to the place where the sword is.
The archbishop says to Arthur:
"If thou wilt swear
to sustain the Church, uphold peace,
be a help to thy people,
and maintain just laws, then come forth, and take up this sword!"

7734. *ward* added above the line.
7759. MS. *Arthew.*

For pite he wepe, & many mo, j-wys. 7760
Arthur swears, So that he there Swor be God almyhty
althis to susteyne *with* herte ful trewly—
"And be alle thynges that jn Erthe be,
J schal hem Sosteyne jn my degre." 7764
kneels down, with this anon Arthewr he knelyd adown
amonges al the peple that was jn vyrown.
takes up the sword, Anon the Swerd there vpe he took,
Seenge many man that on hym gan look, 7768
and as lyhtly took hyt vpe Ryht there,
as Jn the ston hyt not ne were.
bears it to the altar, So bar he the swerd forth jn his hond,
and to thawter they hym ladde, ȝe vndirstond, 7772
and is crowned. and there hym Sacryd, with-owten dowte,
& as to here kyng they gonne to hym lowte.
Ek anoynt he was anon therto,
& alle that belonged to a kyng also. 7776
After the coronation, the people leave the cathedral. Whanne this coronacion j-Endyd was,
and the masse j-Fenysched be goddis gras,
owt of the mynstre alle wenten they anon,
and behelden there aftyr this Ston, 7780
The stone with the anvil is gone! But they ne wyste where hit was do,
So sodeynliche aweye was hit hem fro.
And jn this maner Arthew[r] kyng chosen was,
as ȝe han me herd Rehersyn jn this plas. 7784

[leaf 117 *d*]
Chap. VII.

Thus Here-Aftyr the Storye Doth telle
what aftyr in kyng Arthewris cort befelle,
To Arthur's court come, with hundreds of knights, that aftyre his coronacioun the ȝer Sewenge
To his cowrt Repeyrede bothe knyht & kynge. 7788
king Loth of Orkney, To that court cam the kyng of orkanye
with Fyve hundred knyhtes jn his compenye.
king Uriens of Gory, Also thedyr kam þe kyng of Gore, þat hyht vryens,
with Foure hundred knyhtes Jn his presens. 7792
king Newtris of Garlot, thanne kam the kyng newtris Garlot,

7769. *ād* corrected from *as*. 7774. MS. *gōnne*.
7782. *was*, *w* corrected from *a*. 7783. MS. *Arthew*.
7784. The remainder of the column blank; in the left margin: *Coronacō arthur'*.
7787. *aftyr'*, *r'* squeezed in.

that kyng Artheuris Sostir weddid, wel j wot,
and with him vij hundred knyhtes of pris.
And aftyr hym to cowrt þere kam j-wis
the kyng that was of ryht Gorre,
that Carados of brebas hyht, Sykerle;
Therto he was knyht of þe table rownde,
and with hym vj hundred knyhtes Sownde.

king Carados of Right Gory,

Aftyr hym kam kyng auguysyaax so fre,
that kyng of scotlond was, Sykerle,
a 3ong man, ful hardy, & gret of prowesse,
with fyve hundred knyhtes, more ne lesse.
Aftyr hym to court kam kyng ydyers
with fowre hundred knyhtes stowt & Fers,
wel j-armed & harneysed owt ryht,
Thowgh anon they scholde gon to fyht.

king Augwysas of Scotland,

and king Ydiers (of Cornwall).

whanne these kynges were Sembled jn fere,
of hem gret joye made kyng Arthewr there,
and many grete festes he hem made
with grete presentes & 3iftes to maken hem glade.
Every lord there aftyr his degre,
Grete jewelis he hem 3af, Sykirle.

Arthur is much pleased,

makes great feasts in their honour, and bestows ample gifts.

whanne these Barowns beheldyn al this,
the grete presentes and jewellis of pris
and the grete festyng that he hem made,
anon there-offen dysdeyn they hadde,
and amongis hem-Self they gonne to say:
"we mown ben Sory to abyden this day,
To sen a knave of so lowe degre,
kyng of this rem that he scholde be!"

In the barons, however, the old envy and pride are roused.

Anon his 3iftes they refused echon,
and streyht to the kyng wenten anon,
and deden hym wel forto vndirstonde
they ne held hym non kyng of that londe,
and boden hym faste thens to hye
owt of that lond ryht Schortlye,
For but 3yf he wolde the lond forsake,
they wolden hym werche bothe tene & wrake,

They refuse his gifts,

disown him as their king,

and threaten his life.

7801. See Notes. 7815. MS. *beheldyng.*
7824. *wentē*, *w* corrected from *g*.

and but ȝif he thus dede, sekerlye,
ellis to the dethward he scholde hye.
whanne kyng Arthewr herde here grete manas,
King Arthur must fly and be in hiding. thanne owt of strengthe of karlion gan he pas,
and there logged hym prevyly jn the town,
For mochel he dred hym of tresown;
where as he abod fyftene dayes,
þat but fewe wysten where, þe sothe to saye.
Merlin arrives. thanne happed it aftyr, as j ȝow telle,
that Merlyn jnto þat town cam, as befelle,
and jn his owne Semblawnce aperede openlye,
For that of the peple he wolde be seye.
And thussone as they hym Sye,
gretly they Merveilled, Sekirlye.
The barons send for him, Anon the lordis aftyr him gonne sende,
and Merlyne ful gladliche to hem gan wende.
Anon as these Barowns Syen him comeng,
aȝens hym they wenten jn Metynge,
and of hym gret joye they made,
take him into a palace, and jnto a fair paleys they him ladde,
that stood be a reverys syde,
& jnto a fair Mede there gonne they byde.
[leaf 118 *a*] Whanne Jn that place that they Were,
anon Merlyn they aresownd there,
and ask his opinion of the new king. and this to hym was here askyng,
how that hym likede be here newe kyng—
"That therchebisschope of dover hath crowned here
aȝens oure leve Jn alle Manere."
Merlin greatly commends him. "Certes, lordynges," quod Merlyne tho,
"they myhte non bettere hauen j-do."
"what Mene ȝe?" quod the barowns thanne,
"how speke ȝe of this jlke Manne?
jn this Rem Many worthy lordis there be,
More worthy to ocupien that worthy degre
The barons urge Arthur's low birth. thanne a knave that noman doth knowe
whens he cam, of hygh oþer lowe!"
"ȝe Seyn as that ȝe thinken," quod Merlyn,
"but now wylen ȝe heren of cownseyl Myn,
and vndirstondith what j schal Seye:

7838. *to*, MS. *ta*. 7867. *that* corrected from *the*.

73900

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Merlin.

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